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Grattan.
ZBIE

LEGENDS

OF THE RHINE

AND OF

THE LOW COUNTRIES.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "HIGHWAYS AND BY-WAYS",

ETC.

"All thynges in this Boke that ye shall rede,
Doe as ye lyst, there shall no manne you binde
Them to beleue as surely as your crede;
But, notwithstandynge, certes in my mynde,
I durst well swere, as true ye shall them fynde,
In euery poynt eche answere by and by,
As are the iudgmentes of astrologye." SIR THOMAS MORE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE DOUBLE DOUBT.

CONTINUED.

THE DOUBLE DOUBT.

CHAPTER III.

As the setting sun softly and gradually retires from earth, gilding it with even its latest ray, so does Hope steal from the breast its glowing beams had enlightened, and leaves for awhile the reflection of its influence behind. And long round Erilda's lone and widowed heart did the spell continue its delusions; and often deceived by Hope's siren voice she still clung to each new promise, and strove to be again and again betrayed. The fatal tidings of Sir Harold's fall beneath Rudolf's murderous weapon at length reached Sternfels. The anguish of the father may not be told. How then attempt to describe that of the wife?

Six times had the return of spring wakened the torpid flowers, and bade the young year

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ZBIE

had penetrated to his desolate home, that Rupert felt the wild thrill of expectant avarice curdle his blood, and fill his pulse with a monstrous energy. An empoisoned, yet a genial, fluid seemed to run through his whole frame, and to transform him magically into something he had never before been or imagined. A thousand pageants of grandeur floated before him—castles, domains, honours, and hoards of wealth. He recoiled for a moment with an instinctive, but an expiring, throb of right principle; for wherever he turned, in whatever way he sought to dissipate his newly excited feelings, the same visions of greatness sprung up spontaneously in his mind. At length grown familiar with this train of thought, which was encouraged by a host of dissolute companions, he began to be satisfied that it was but right and natural. "Where is the guilt," thought he, "since my cousin Harold is dead, in hoping for possession of what is legally my own? And if an old man happens to stand between me and my just inheritance, what sin in wishing him in heaven?"

But still the aged count lived on, in spite of the impatient calculations of his hungry kins-

man. And the latter soon began to run the usual career of expectant heirs, hurried on by all the accessory impulses by which they are assailed and mastered. Leagued with extravagance and vice, he rode the giddy round, and folly toiled to win disgrace, while conscience sternly goading him the while, he was by degrees prepared for any act of villainy which would end his over-wrought excitement. Erilda, thus abandoned by him who had possessed her whole confidence, mourned the change more for her false kinsman's sake than her own; while she bent beneath the withering blight which strikes down the heart that was ripening in the mellow warmth of confidence. Yet no reproaches broke from her. She suffered in calm serenity, and seemed like the spirit of happiness, left in mercy to hover over the scenes whence the substance had departed.

The sixth summer since the fatal epoch of Sir Harold's setting out for Hungary had now come round, smiling in the breeze or frowning in storms; and vegetation's ruddy cheek was beginning to ripen in its beams. Frequent travellers, pilgrims, and minstrels, monks and men-

dicants, presented themselves at the gates of Sternfels, and always found a ready welcome. Though no costly banquets were spread, as of old, for the entertainment of the gay and happy, worldly cares or wearied feet were a sure passport to the hospitality of the castle. Erilda rarely appeared in the hall, unless some grateful visitant expressly asked permission to thank and bless her, or some itinerant son of song implored the honour of chanting an extempore ballad, in honour of those who had sheltered and befriended him.

"The noon burns fiercely to-day," said the warder, as a wearied and weather-beaten minstrel entered the porch.

"Ay, but the frowns of fortune scorch still more fiercely," replied the wanderer. "Yet it often happens," and he smiled as he spoke, "that the hottest day melts away in showers at evening! What think you, Master Warder; will your mistress be inclined to hear a lightsome roundel? I should like to chace the tears from the eyes of beauty, and make a joyous strain resound in these walls, where they tell me pleasure has not been for a long time a visitant."

"Rest thee, rest thee awhile, good friend. When thou art refreshed thou mayst think of song and lute; there is no melody in a parched throat. But much I doubt me, that even when your harmonies are at their best, my mistress will be disposed to list any notes of merry cadence. She much better likes the sorrowing tone that reminds her of buried joys."

A hurried repast was partaken of by the minstrel, and he had very soon collected round him in the great hall a circle of the well-pleased maidens, who but seldom heard so sprightly a measure as that to which he tuned his lute. Erilda had consented to become also a listener, and she stood pensively, with Freda by her side, so pensively that the minstrel at length begged of her to deign a greater share of attention to his song, "which told of every sweet that could gratify the heart, and strewed flowers on the path of life." The smiling maidens pressed forward to join in the entreaty, and Freda too put up her gentle supplications to her mother. Erilda however checked the general flow of affectionate assiduity, and she desired the minstrel to sing no more of images of bliss, "which were but

mockery to her, who saw every form of joy but as a phantom that fled while she pursued it."

The minstrel seemed affected by this remonstrance, and turning his lute to a plaintive air, he sung as follows.

MINSTREL'S SONG.

I.

"No flowers for me! For here they may not flourish,
This wretched breast their dreary tomb might be;
But nought that warmth would cheer or sunshine nourish,
Can bloom, where all that's bright must perish—
No flowers for me!

II.

"No smiles for me! my anguish never sleepeth,
Hope beams alone on hearts from sorrow free;
O'er the smooth brow his joyous vigil keepeth,
But shuns the heavy lid that weepeth—
No smiles for me!"

While the minstrel sung, Erilda's tears flowed freely. He, seeming to watch every movement of her mind, saw that feeling was touched—apathy aroused. Following up the impression he had made, and as if resolved to awaken, no matter at what cost of suffering, the deepest and

most intense of her emotions, he had no sooner finished the last of those stanzas than he suddenly swept the strings of his instrument in a symphony still more sad. He then sang as follows, in a low and solemn strain of recitative, while his accompaniment was so mournful that woe might have heard it and sighed still deeper than before.

"Hark to the groans of the wounded brave,
As they writhe on the chilling earth,
And faintly sigh for their common grave,
Or in fits of anguish wildly rave,
And curse the hour of their birth!

"Their mouths are parched, and their drooping heads
Hang listless, as they lie,
Pillowed in gore on their earthy beds,
And with fearful wailings cry
For death—but they cannot die!

"That warrior stretched on the brow of the hill,
Has expiring lain three nights full of pain,
Damp, agonized, and chill—
While the life-blood's thick and sluggard drain
Weak, drizzling, flows—but the cruel vein
Seems full of vigour still.

"With faltering tone, he weakly cries,
'Now welcome Heaven! now world farewell!'
He sinks, he faints, and his languid eyes
No longer glare on the dismal dell—

But it is not so with him who dies!
The lips unclosed—and the frightful stare
That in death are seen, are wanting there.

"Slowly he moves—once more reviving;
He lives! he lives! his eyelids ope!
From transient pangs new hope deriving——"

A long pause after the utterance of these emphatic words made the listeners, and more particularly Erilda, watch for the concluding line of the stanza with breathless impatience. The minstrel, fixing his looks on her with a still more marked expression of encouragement and cheerfulness, at length sung—

"Yes, lady! while there's life there's hope!"

Agitated and overpowered by the various feelings so strongly excited, Erilda sunk on a seat, and her daughter and attendant damsels strayed round her to offer sundry services. The minstrel, as though he had felt his work completed, retired from the hall. Erilda soon recovered, and as she calmly reflected on what had just passed, she could not resist the ecstatic thought, that the minstrel's wild song contained some direct allusion to her cause of suffering,

nor could she believe that he had but wantonly tortured her. She turned her eyes to seek him, and on finding he was gone she despatched several of her maidens to bring him back. But when they reached the portal, they learned that the stranger had left the castle, merely saying to the warder, with a significant smile, when the latter invited him to stay till the burning heat was over—" Thou knowest, good friend, the hottest day may melt in mild showers at eve."

When Erilda heard of this answer, it gave fresh strength to her belief of good. In her own despite—for she had long resolved to repress every thing like hope—her spirits seemed rising high beyond their usual depression. Her eyes beamed, her bosom heaved, and her cheeks were flushed, unwonted symptoms with one so long sunk in apathetic insensibility. Hours passed over uncounted. The bell that summoned to the early evening meal was unheeded. Moving with a step so light that she seemed to tread less on earth than air, she hastened to her favourite retreat, unmindful of the threatening aspect of the sky, which foretold a fast-coming storm.

The sun had sunk in fire and tinged the world, as if in anger, with a crimson glow. Storm-pregnant clouds rose in the eastward, and rolled upwards in monstrous and fantastic shapes. Broad flashes spread across the hills in sheets of sickly red; and low thunderings came onwards with every gust that swept the valley. The moon, full and clear, hung high in heaven; her silvery beams mingling with the lightning's flash and the deep blaze of the sun. Erilda saw these symptoms of awful convulsion, but feared them not. Neither did she note the direful assemblage of omens, which in less absorbing moments might have struck her as presages of ill. The bat was skimming the air around her; the owl sat in a bush above; a toad croaked in the sedge below; and a snake was hissing in the grass at her feet!

The rain now came pattering in large drops upon the leaf-roofed canopy of Erilda's bower; and the trees bent and creaked to the gloomy wind. Magic could not combine more portentous solemnities; nor guilt find more fitting accompaniments for its dark doings. Still Erilda gazed fearlessly on the scowling sky, rapt in

a reverie of long forgotten hope, when suddenly a voice rose from the shrubbery just below her, in tones so sweet that they might have almost hushed the deep and dismal sounds with which they mixed. Erilda started into a throb of newly awakened amaze. "Is it," exclaimed she, "the stranger minstrel that mingles his mysterious strains with the sounds of the storm?—No, no! there never lived on earth but one mortal voice that could breathe such tones as those!"

Another thunder-burst gone by, the warbled music came again; and as the singer had approached nearer and nearer, the air and words both fell distinctly upon the spell-bound listener's ear:—

When friendship's honest vows we breathe
They need not flow from gilded bowers;
And if affection twine the wreath
No matter where she culls the flowers!

"Shield and protect me, saints of heaven! Holy shade of her whose grave I clasp, watch over me—save thy daughter!" exclaimed Erilda, sinking on the mound, breathless and distracted. In a moment more the rustling of the foliage told her that some one burst through it. A man

had indeed violated the sanctuary; and throwing himself on one knee beside her, he caught her in his arms—her form clinging instinctively to his pressure, and a not-to-be-mistaken voice murmured these delightful words:—"Rise, rise my Erilda—my wife—to new found joy, to the embrace of thy long lost husband!" And obeying the summons which echoed the laws of nature and love, she arose and threw herself transported into his enfolding arms.

At this instant a fierce and sulphuric flash enveloped both; a simultaneous crash, as though a rock of brass was shivered by the rattling peal was heard; an old oak close beside blazed up as the bolt struck its stem; yet heedless of the shock, he softly murmured, "Shrink not, my bride, but lead me to happiness! Oh, shudder not, Erilda! See, the very heavens hold jubilee in honour of our second nuptials!"

CHAPTER IV.

The fury of the tempest passed by. The last echo of the thunder murmured among the distant hills. One breeze swept dying along the waters of the Rhine, as if the storm-fiend had breathed his last. Reviving nature rose up in new vigour and spread a greener garment over the plains. The grass sprang freshly to meet the elastic foot of the hare and coney. The moist grapes shone clustering on the vines. The wild flowers sent out new odours; while the riotous songsters of bush and brake shook off the glittering dew-drops, and myriads of insects were seen sporting over the blossomed herbage, in the mild exhalations which all earth sent up like incense offered to heaven.

And if meaner nature thus paid its tribute of praise, how did she, the happiest of Earth's daughters, pour out her grateful thanks? With what rapture did she hail the light that broke on her bosom's gloom, as suddenly as the spring

bursts forth after the dreary night of a northern winter? With a heart full of holy ardour, Erilda stole from the couch where her husband lay in slight slumber, sleep having at length untied the fond embrace of love. She knelt at the casement, tears of happiness stealing down her cheeks, like the sweet dew that flows at dawn from the flower-topped tree of Canada. Her oraisons finished, she turned to gaze again on him who, next to heaven, was worthy of her idolatry. The whirl of joy of the preceding night had not left her power or thought to scan each varying shade in his loved form. She only knew that he was there. Changed no doubt, in feature much, the natural effects of time and suffering; but his feelings of affection all right—she heeded not the rest! But hanging over him as he now slept in the morning ray, she could not resist a wandering, an uneasy sensation. It was not that she marvelled to see his brow marked with the blighting touch of care; but that he, restored to joy and peace, should now groan and start at times in perturbed motion, tossing wide his arms as though anxious to rush upon some noxious thing, and then

struggling as if a phantom's weight oppressed him. Erilda, pained at his disquiet, even though she felt it to be unreal, was on the point of awakening him to the truth of blissful fact, when suddenly he exclaimed, in fierce accents, "Die, hateful wretch!" and, with clenched fist, close-knit frown, and widely opening eyes, he sprang from the couch, a fancied falchion in his hand, and big drops standing on his brow.

Erilda had scarcely shrunk from the thunderbolt at whose fall nature itself seemed to shudder—but that look of terror seemed to carry death to her heart's happiness. The agitated dreamer, however, soon recovered from his imagined pangs, be they of what nature they might, and drawing her towards him, with a tender look, he said, "Oh, Erilda! come and breathe the balm to my tortured bosom—fly not that once-treasured home, though memory breaks its rest, as the winds stir the sea's surface into unquiet waves."

Reassured by his soothing tone—oh, how easy is it to hush the fears and doubts of true affection!—her heart beat calmly once more, and

she pressed him to reveal the cause of his emotion.

"Ask not, sweet love," said he, in a cheerful tone, "'tis past and gone—'tis nothing! a mere thought—a shadow of dark hours gone by—which, like yesternight's storm, only serves to purify our heaven of delight. But hark! I hear the sound of the assembling vassals. Ah, how much more sweetly will their rude greetings f ll on my ear than the forced acclamations of worldly crowds! We must, love, descend and meet my father—see, he stands already at the gate. And now, my own Erilda, on this happy occasion thou must be my prompter, for in truth I need one. Many of the faces, well known in early youth, have faded from my mind. Look at this wound, one of war's prodigal gifts—the stroke fell close on my brain,—and I doubt me it broke some of the threads in memory's web. I often vainly strive to retrace in my mind the features of individuals, or the minute details of facts; but some blest cares, some loved faces, lie so deeply graven, they defy corroding time or effacing accident! Thus, my best life! each

of thy dear traits, every shifting shade of thy expressive countenance, has ever been as freshly before me, as in the days of our early love, when the skilful limner traced them here."

With these words, and a look of tenderness, he drew from his breast the well-known portrait, which Erilda little thought had escaped the perils of his manifold adventures since they parted. This proof of his constant affection brought tears of delighted consciousness to her eyes. "See, beloved one," said he; "here was the amulet that kept my heart safe from a thought unworthy of love or of thee!"

She looked doubtfully through a mist of tears. Then turned aside her head, smiling pensively, and exclaiming, "Alas! 'tis true this once was me—but it is me no more. I cannot believe the whispers of vanity that would tell me I resemble now what I was then, in blushing hope, a promised bride, catching from thee the smile that played on thy features, and which the flattering artist made for thee while my own. Alas! I am indeed changed since then. And canst thou, Harold, fix thy fond looks still upon a blighted flower?"

"Lovely, ever-blooming Erilda! let no words like these escape thy lips. Like the bee who abandons the swarm to taste the full-blown rose, whose young buds had before pleased him, so have I left the world's crowds for the meridian charms of her whose youthful beauty had fascinated me."

It was in converse like this, suited to young lovers rather than old married folk, that the unmarked minutes were flying till Freda came to summon them. She sportively chided her mother's delay; but silently hid her blushing face against her stranger sire's bosom, as he tenderly folded her in his arms.

Never did a day of rejoicing break more blithely than that on which the united vassals of Sternfels and Liebenstein woke the echoes of wood and hill with their loud shouts. Tumult and faction may swell the venal crowds of cities; trumpets and timbrils flourish in the triumphal march of kings; flattery strain its throat in efforts to outvoice the tones of selfishness—all is a dead-weight on the heart—all is discord to the ear. But when true feeling bursts from honest sincerity, the modest sounds are more grateful

than the most studied melodies of false praise. The old towers of the twin castles now sent back the echoes of such cheering tones. The festive throng clamoured its rejoicings, without any mercy to the sensitive ears of refinement. Echo started to hear such sounds, where grief had so long stood sentinel. The wondrous news of Sir Harold's safe return was soon conveyed from hamlet to hamlet, and the little world of the district poured forth its population, to hail the event and pay the heart's homage to their new found lord.

And he now stands in the midst of the throng, Count Eberhard resting on his arm; the one like the shaft of some proud column which has braved the assaults of wind and time, the other like a splendid fragment of the wall which leans against the pillar for support. And Erilda! and Freda! Never could the pencil sketch a lovelier group, though taste and talent had exhausted their sweetest imaginings.

The feeble pen cannot paint the joys of such a day as this. It may be imagined only by the pleasure-loving heart that lightly beats to sounds and sights of innocent mirth. Such may

picture the crowd gamboling on the green, decked in all the gaudy display of the rustic wardrobe and the glories of the rifled gardens; the gay flags and banners; the dance, the music, the song, the shouts; the indescribable grace of an assemblage of objects, incongruous to each other, when the rude children of nature let their hearts run riot. Next came the feasting, furnished by Count Eberhard's hospitality to all comers; when cellar and larder poured out their deepest stores to those in whom appetite kept ample pace with joy.

The banquet finished, and many a flask of purest Rhine wine emptied in honour of the day, every eye seemed to fix on Sir Harold for the promised explanation of the causes of his long absence and miraculous return. Count Eberhard sat at the head of the board, his son placed at one side, and at the other the strange minstrel, the companion of his homeward journey, whose mysterious but significative songs had awakened Erilda's feelings so keenly, and prepared her for the coming of her long-lost lord. The old count rose at length, and turning towards Sir Harold, he said, while every other

voice was instantly hushed, "Prop of my house! Harold, my beloved and valiant son! now tell thy marvellous tale, which so many expectant ears are waiting for. Tell us all what miracle has given thee back to us, to be once more the soul of general hope, and the source of new life to me!"

"My honoured sire! my wife, my child—my friends!" said he thus appealed to, in a firm and affectionate tone, "endearing names! Associate links in the chain which binds me to these loved scenes of youth and happiness! To all present, whose hopes and wishes blend their magic tracery through my own, I hasten to reveal the main incidents of six years' endurance of ills, that would have bowed down any mind not upheld by the excitement of this oft hoped-for scene. It were needless now to relate the events of the bloody fight that was supposed to have numbered me with the dead, or the preceding events, which, I learn from my wife and father, were all duly, and with but slight variation from truth, conveyed to astonished Germany. Neither need I now dwell on the suffering I endured when suspended life returned to

me again in agony still greater than accompanied its apparent loss. But my astonishment on reopening my heavy lids may be worth relating—it may amuse and cannot give you pain.

"When I fell on the field of death—of death in all its most hideous forms—my eyes seemed to close on a scene of hell. Bodies lay around me almost putrid in the fiery and fetid air. Sounds were whizzing in my ear, in all the fierce confusion of those which the damned might send forth. Vultures were hovering above, and wolves were prowling around, ardent and anxious for their ready prey. In such a scene I sunk into an oblivion which, as I felt it coming, I believed and hoped was death. When I revived from my trance of pain, every scattered thought seemed to bring conviction that the soul had burst its earthly prison and lived in brighter realms. All round me a scene of wonder was visible. No living form intruded. Not a sound ruffled the still but fragrant air. I lay on a flower-spread couch. A star-enamelled canopy hung above me, beaming with the dazzling lustre reflected from the soft light of a single lamp. Icicles hung pendent from the arch, shining in

diamond splendour. A gushing fountain soothed me, with its quiet fall and the gentle ripplings of its waters as they were lost in the shade beyond. Trees, shrubs, and flowers, of every varying colour, seemed to stand self-planted in magical groups. No fluttering zephyr broke the brilliant cheatery, or shook from the branches of this breezeless grove the crystallized embroidery with which it was spangled.

"Wildered by this burst of soft magnificence, I believed myself in heaven. But a purely mortal rapture took possession of my breast on finding there thy portrait, my Erilda, safely reposing. Oh! how I blest the unknown deliverer, who so well knew the mysteries of that true science of healing which cures the body through the mind, and who had placed within my ready reach the object that could best assure my wakening thought that there was still a paradise on earth!

"The cooling air had assuaged the anguish of my wounds, which were covered with healing salves, and bound with neat fillets. And soon I saw revealed to me the form of him who had done these deeds of Christian charity. Ap-

proaching me, in cautious watchfulness, an old man appeared. He was in that pride of years when manliness dissolves in age, and snowy tresses give token of wisdom. He was a reverend anchorite, one of those abounding blessings of humanity with which the countries of the East are ripe. His words seemed the living breath of sanctity—his looks were like light from beyond the grave! Such was the saint-like man, the genius of the place, who had snatched my still breathing body from heaps of slain and through seas of gore, as soon as night gave facilities to his task. Saved thus by him—let me now picture him dying by me. Nay, start not, my friends—I must hurry through this sad episode of my adventures. The infidel blood hounds knew my deliverer well—they knew that he was most likely to brave the conditions on which they tolerate his existence, and seek to save one victim from the general slaughter. They came to search his spar-formed grotto—they found me with him—they slew him! With a deadlier hate, they dragged me to the more ignoble doom of slavery. The very memory of that fact leaves a blot on a freeman's purity!

A slave! chained to the earth which was watered by the sweat of toil—reproach my wages—stripes my reward—for five dreary years I dragged on the load of life. Despair more than once raised my hand—but the loud command of Heaven seemed to stay the self-destroying stroke, and a voice seemed at the worst of my sufferings to whisper words of hope and comfort!

"Still might my body rot in chains, or sweltering droop in the land of the infidel, had not one gallant friend been near—a fellow prisoner—to give me life in the liberty he procured me. It boots not to tell the many perils through which his cautious valour had to work to obtain our freedom. He succeeded. I was the partner of his flight. From country to country we have worked our weary pilgrimage together; till yestermorn preceding me here, his wild harmony prepared thee my Erilda for my coming, even while his gentle heart was bleeding at the pain he gave, like a surgeon who shrinks while he probes his patient's wound. Watching thee to thy sacred bower, he sought me in my anxious shelter close by; when I, heedless of the tempest, sent forth those blessed sounds of other,

but not happier, days, as most likely to assuage thy fears and harmonize with thy hopes. Here sits my friend, and while my home exists, and you, all my friends, cherish the memory of this day, he shall ever find it his refuge from worldly care or mortal wrong."

Sir Harold ceased, and scarcely had his last words died away, when loud bursts of gratulation rung around the hall. The assemblage soon after broke up, and all wended their homeward way, overflowing with the joyous sympathies of vassal fidelity. But this was not unlike all other cases, in which one or more exceptions are found. And now, as withered branches may disfigure the green symmetry of some shadowing tree, there were found a few among the faithful serfs of Sternfels who gave no response to the clamorous acclamations of the rest, but looked gloom and disappointment in the midst of the general joy. These were the creatures of Rupert of Stalbach, the engines that worked out his ends of extravagance, the purveyors of his spendthrift cravings, whose supplies were acknowledged by anticipated grants and mortgages of large portions of the fair lands of Sternfels. These men, who

every day looked out for the death of Count Eberhard, and the accomplishment of Rupert's promises, contingent on his succeeding to his heritage, were now overwhelmed with grief and rage, at seeing their air-built hopes scattered to the winds. Resolved at least to make Rupert taste the whole bitterness of the draught which they were themselves forced to swallow, they hastened to one of his not distant haunts with malicious speed, and they found him in the midst of his wonted revelry and recklessness. Like the hot Arab, who sucks in the breeze that wafts him pestilence and death, Rupert rushed with open arms to meet the messengers of ill.

"Ah, my good friends," cried he, "I see the good news in your eyes—I read it in your flushed cheeks. He is dead! The old man is gone at length! In another day all will be our own! Our broad hands will grasp it *all!* But now, my friends, you have brought supplies? How much? For much will be wanted to meet immediate calls. Welcome, welcome good friends! Ho, there! wine, for these worthy men! And now, my masters, let us pledge a full cup to the peace of cousin Eberhard's soul!"

This rhapsody was received in silence. No smile of assent gave back the eagerly watched for answer. On the contrary, Rupert saw on the countenances of his tormentors an expression of cold and cruel irony mixed with bitter disappointment. He could not bear this suspense. He pressed furiously for a reply and an explanation. It came. Not in relenting condolence for their common misfortune, but with reproach and taunt, and threat that added to the pangs of the plain spoken truth. Rupert stood for awhile transfixed and speechless. Despair seemed to have paralysed both mind and body. But still his busy thoughts were at work; and whether from conviction or artifice, he quickly announced the conclusions at which he stated them to have arrived. Self-interest quickened his intellect, and either solved a mystery or suggested the best means of turning it to his own account. His silence was at length broken by a loud laugh: not a laugh of maniac despair, but one that might fitly have expressed the glee of some demon over a ripe plan of mischief.

"What then!" cried he, frowning on his companions in the announced ill fortune, "must

I bear these insulting menaces, the ignoble scorn of such things as ye? Paltry miscreants who come to din me with your credulous selfishness? Ye whose murky intellects make ye mentally blind? Sir Harold living? Away, ye pitiful wretches, if ye want proofs of his death, and root them from the rotten graves of Bulgaria. He alive! What bold impostor has come to assume his place and frighten ye from the truth? Ha! ye smile at the suggestion. Ye are pleased with this plain solving of the cheat, that lays this transfigured ghost, and clears your base minds from their unworthy fears? Ye remember then the story of my kinsman's death? Your palsied memories recover the shock, and recall the facts of the case—how the beholders marked Harold and his murderer stalking together through the battle field, so like that the shuddering Turks who gazed on them shrunk back, believing them spectres raised by magic? And who, think ye, has now invaded my rights, and trusting to the changes of six years and the frail memories of credulous fools like you, usurps dead Harold's place in Sternfels,—who but this Rudolf of the Hartz, come from afar to rob me

and ruin you? I have no doubts—not one. My arm shall quick follow the impulse of my mind. I shall soon crush this reprobate; but I shall need your aid, to follow up the justice of my cause, whether by law or force. So now unstring your common purse! Out with the supplies! What! ye hesitate? Hear me, then: by Hell's worst pangs I swear to ye, that should your griping avarice refuse this call for our common interests, I will instantly fly to Sternfels, acknowledge the usurper, throw myself on his sense of what is wisest for his own security, obtain an ample compromise, and abandon all my claims. What! does this make ye tremblingly generous, for your own sakes? It seems so." And, as the group of usurers poured out the contents of their purses, and promised further supplies for the morrow, Rupert added, with a sneer of the deepest scorn, "What, all emptied? Now, then, base minions, avaunt!" and suiting the action to the word, he drove them with fresh insults from his presence.

A month had passed fleetly over the mild enjoyments of Sternfels. All was recovered happiness and cheerful quiet, far different from the

woeful tranquillity which had for years reigned over the place. Within the castle, as without, every thing breathed the settled calm of security, when one morning, as the little circle were placidly indulging their domestic mood, a murmured din arose from the court yard, and soon increased to loud and uproarious shouts, while thick-clattering feet were accompanied on the stairs and in the passages by threats and imprecations. Count Eberhard, Erilda, and Freda, alarmed at the rude sounds, turned shrinking for protection towards him, in whom the noisy crash seemed to rouse up every stirring feeling of the soul. Seizing his ponderous rapier, which hung close by, he placed himself before the three objects of his care; threw one arm around them, held the other ready for fight, his well-proved brand high poised above him—his brow gathered, and his look fixed for battle.

At this moment the door of the chamber was flung violently open, and one of the castle retainers entered abruptly, breathless and bleeding. —"My noble masters," cried he, "a ferocious band force the entrances too feebly guarded." The man fell to the earth as he uttered the

words; and at the instant, Rupert of Stalbach rushed in, followed by several of his stalwart associates. His looks spoke deperate purposes, and with voice in accordance with his menacing air he exclaimed—"Yield, impostor!"—but ere he could proceed in his sentence his eye caught the fixed and piercing look of mixed contempt and scrutiny sent forth from this majestic looking being whom he so ventured to confront. Rupert turned askance, unable to bear this look, beaming from a countenance which seemed to shine in the dignity of conscious right.

"This is the work of magic," cried Rupert, turning to his associates. "He is impostor and wizard both. That light once beamed in Harold's eyes, and this sorcerer has caught it for his own! Living look casts no such expression as that!"—and with these words, but without venturing again to brave the glance he shrunk from, he stole shuddering away; while all his blustering band quickly followed him—dispersed and scattered by a frown! They fled so fast, and the aspect of the whole scene was so suddenly changed to precisely what it was before their irruption that it seemed scarcely the work of fact, but rather the agency

of some illusion, dissipated ere it was rightly observed. The old count looked his amaze, Erilda was silent, her eyes fondly fixed upon her lord, while resentment of Rupert's daring slander flushed her cheeks. At length Count Eberhard spoke:—"What meant the ruffian aspersion?" said he, "does then abandoned Rupert, the disgraced one of his name and race, hope to cover his own infamy by flinging an attaint on thy honour?"

No answer met these questions. Nothing was to be seen in the countenance of the questioned but an expression of high disdain, as if he scorned even to remove the slur cast upon his dignity. He stalked the room in haughty silence, when Erilda, as if awoke to some point in a new train of thought, suddenly addressed him:—"But say, my Harold,—and it is the audacious blasphemy which mixed the vile word impostor with thy name that prompts my question,—say why I have never yet heard thy lips pronounce that marvellous, that mysterious name, so linked with thy former fate, and which in spite of my shuddering repugnance comes still irresistibly blended

with every thought of thee—Rudolph of the Hartz?"

Her look asked for reply, but it sunk back within herself as it met the furious glance that darted from his. His cheek glowed deeply, and his very forehead was flushed—with anger it seemed to her—at the mention of this name. But like the excitement produced by his dream, this passed quickly over. In a subdued tone, which marked a struggle to preserve his calmness unruffled, he replied:—"Oh, wonder not, my Erilda, if at the collision caused by my memory with that abhorred name, I feel the lightning of thought flashing and searing my mind. Even in my dreaming hours the phrensied fit comes o'er me, which haunts me at times awake. Wonder not then, my loved one, if even your angel lips cannot sanctify the odious sound of this one word—this solitary name, which must ever stand accursed in my feelings."

"Forgive me, Harold, for an unintended mischief. Oh, too well I know thy bosom's movements now—too well doth mine respond to the agony of that which broods over outraged friend-

ship. And if I feel this strongly, how must thou suffer when thy memory is roused to a thought of that fell traitor! Oh, pardon this first, this last pang by me inflicted!"

Thus spoke the wife's affection—solaced and reassured by one word and look of kindness. But the Count Eberhard sighed deeply, and mused still more so, as if his breast contained some secret cause of agitation connected with the words just spoken. Meanwhile Rupert and his recreant gang had disappeared, contenting their valour with a loud utterance of threats at the walls of the castle from which they had so speedily retreated. While the leader, to cheer the drooping spirits of his comrades, checked his own doubts and fears to bring quiet to theirs; and swore that if human laws had power to justify right and punish wrong, the wizard whose unearthly glance had so overwhelmed him should soon be sent back to his liege lord, the devil!

A yell of loud applause hailed this denunciation, and closed the display of courageous boasting, which waged war against witchcraft and wielded no weapons but words.

CHAPTER V.

Another year was gone by, a year of strife, contest, and disputation. For Rupert of Stalbach, supported and supplied by his baffled and bewildered crew, urged every means that could agitate the question of his rights before the tardy tribunals, and with the ill arranged forms which then distorted law and made justice a mere mockery. The proofs which Rupert offered in support of his charge of imposture and magic resolved themselves into "the admitted battle, where Sir Harold was seen to fall under the stroke of his twin-like assassin; the ominous and evil-boding night on which the stranger appeared at Sternfels, to assume the place of the murdered man; his forgetfulness of several among the vassals and serfs who thronged to welcome his arrival; the deep fits of abstraction, such evidence of probable guilt; unlike the former well-remembered cheerfulness of Sir Harold. The wonderful resemblance of form and feature

to the latter was not a totally unusual circumstance between brothers; but what could produce it in those unlinked by ties of blood, except the deadly arts of glamour, that change forms and feelings, while a philter, no doubt, cunningly administered to Erilda, had in all likelihood warped her mind to believe the reality of what every one else must plainly see to be false?"

Many slighter links bound this chain of evidence together. The accused heard all with calm contempt. When interrogatories thronged on him in all the subtlety of law, he merely gave his negative or assent, without the least remark. There were some who did not fail to observe that this looked more like cautious cunning than indignant truth. Numerous witnesses vouched for the identity of the present "young lord" of Sternfels, with him who had been born and brought up there: others it is true, who passed for keen observers, traced what appeared some discrepancies in manner, and pointed out some points of difference in looks which led them to a contrary conclusion. But these were all silenced

and put down by the perfect confidence with which Count Eberhard and so many others confirmed Sir Harold's actual presence, and scouted the notion of imposture or magic. After duly weighing the case, and as Rupert and his friends did not fail to suggest, being much, if not unduly influenced by the interest of Count Eberhard, the judges pronounced their sentence of acquittal. It was founded on the opinion that "villainy could not in any case so give the lie to probable truth. That mortal memory could not treasure up, even though industrious deceit might have collected so many, the little trivial incidents of youth as were constantly touched upon in the most natural manner by the accused knight. That it was above all impossible that the former secrets of man and wife could be known but to one or the other: and that however common persons might be deceived by a striking resemblance, at least the partner of a man's bed and bosom could not be so." As to the charge of magic, it was scouted altogether, resting on no proof whatever, and the only guilt seen by the judges was in the conspiracy formed

by the ravenous heir of Sternfels and his supporters, to crush an innocent man and obtain his rights.

When the judgement which absolved him from this disgraceful accusation was conveyed to the acquitted knight, no frown of anger could be traced on his brow—no smile of triumph on his lip—no vaunt broke from him over his foiled accusers. If any emotion appeared, it was one of pity for their disgrace.

And how felt Erilda, during the heavy period between the early accusation and the final acquittal? Did she, while proofs were raked together and doubts accumulated, vacillate or tremble for his fate? No, firm and confident, she repelled every surmise of uncertainty; and when it was sought to shake her faith by insinuation, assertion, or threat, she only smiled and turned to him she loved and trusted. This, this is true love, fast clinging through danger and ignominy; and breaking through the tangled web of suspicion, as the breath of morning scatters the gossamer which hangs in frail festoons from branch to branch.

Rupert of Stalbach, goaded almost to mad-

ness by the result of his efforts, stepped on from every gradation between hatred and vengeance till he was ripe and ready for any desperate act. In spite of the decision pronounced by the judges and approved by the world at large, he maintained his accusation, and laboured incessantly for new proofs in its support. The associates in his efforts, urged by the common ruin which threatened to engulf them all, did not fail him in each emergency. But it was not for love of truth that they sifted evidence and sought discovery. The light of truth carries blindness to to their like, and gain is the divinity at whose shrine they offer homage while working in their own sordid cause. The fame of the disputed title was bruited far and wide, and the lovers of the marvellous did not want excitement, nor fail to follow it up by exaggeration.

Still the seasons rolled on, indifferent to the agitations of mankind; and Time flapped his steady wings alike over guilt and innocence, though the one might fancy them to lag slowly, and the other to fly with redoubled speed. The summer gradually expired, sinking imperceptibly into more temperate months; and ere autumn

was observed to have run its career, winter was far advanced. A mild season in a moderate climate brought none of those sudden changes which shake more northern latitudes. Spring had again returned, and the pregnant plains teemed once more with life. And while in the new-leafed groves and woods of Sternfels the young nestlings chirped their early songs, a sound of blither joyance broke within the halls. For Erilda, to crown the height of her own and her husband's happiness, had given birth to a fine boy. The joy attendant on such an event, which gave a lineal heir to the title and estates, and placed both beyond dispute, might well demand some more than passing record; but the forms of guilt flit across the tenor of the story, and gathering groans seem to stifle each sound of revelry and rejoicing.

While pleasure filled the halls and bowers, and every heart beat high with sympathetic pride, Count Eberhard formed the sole exception to the common feeling. He was evidently fast drooping to the grave. The lambent flame of life flickered and threatened to subside. His spirit, fluttering, as it were, on the world's con-

fines, longed to sigh itself calmly away. The softened lustre of his eyes would at times fix complacently on the dear-loved group that watched his couch, yet at times the lids would close as if to shut out some painful forms of fancy, while low sighs spoke a hidden sorrow, and a hectic tinge seemed to tell that it was coupled with some thought of shame. Lured by the summer warmth, he often left the castle, accompanied by his old confessor or by Freda, to wander in the copses or glades close at hand; but oftener he sought the silent woods alone, no witness on his wanderings but the eye of Heaven, while he sent up his prayers to the God of nature, in the fitting temple formed by the verdant sod below and the outstretched branches above.

The second anniversary of the day on which the strange minstrel appeared at the castle of Sternfels, followed by him who now reigned paramount there, was now about to be kept, with the usual festivities and rejoicings. On the evening preceding this now established festival, Count Eberhard shewed more than usual emotion. A select party of friends were assembled at the castle, and they, with his own family,

were more than commonly assiduous towards the old man. When the hour for retiring came, he took from Erilda her infant son, and pressing him fervently to his breast, he kissed him, and prayed with all the grace of natural religion, that years of health and happiness might be granted the boy. The pious invocation finished, his mind seemed once more overcast; and after a pause, he said, with an effort at composure,—"Now, my friends, night woos me to retire. My full heart bids ye all farewell; yet with its fulness, which ought to be of unmixed joy, one bitter drop of early error mingles and turns it to gall. The memory of this taint is always struggling for utterance. Pride has long kept it concealed. But duty to my beloved son here breaks down every restraint. His detracted purity requires the confession of my sin. When abandoned Rupert urged his accusal, and mixed the charge of magic with his wild assertion, I had nearly broken my silence, with an avowal that would easily have solved the miracle, and melted down the wonder, of my son Harold's likeness to that dark wretch, whose name thrills me with horror. I am now exhausted; but at

to-morrow's noon, when we all with the numerous guests of our festival are assembled, I will publicly make my confession, moving a load of remorse off my conscience, and establishing beyond any further cavil the perfect purity of my son."

After these words the old count withdrew, and whispered conjectures immediately arose as to the promised revelation. But he the most concerned of all uttered no sound nor hazarded any opinion. Buried in a deep reverie, he neither spoke, nor sighed, nor moved. But his expressive countenance told that thought was busy. What feelings might be at work to move his lip and light his eyes none might divine. Emotion for his slandered fame, wounded pride, astonishment, alarm, the fear of danger, projects of ill,—any of these might produce such symptoms. And each or all were evident, as passion or prejudice coloured the minds of the several observers. Thus Erilda saw nothing but natural surprise and the frown of recollected anger for past injuries. One witness was there, however, whose suspicions took a different turn. He was one of those minions of Rupert of Stal-

bach, who, feigning friendship for the circle of Sternfels, frequented the castle only for the purpose of watching the proceedings of its inmates, and reporting them to his employer, one of that degraded class held in scorn by the veriest dregs of guilt, a spy!—short, but eloquent word that speaks all that language can tell of infamy. This wretch saw conscious crime in the hectic flush which to Erilda displayed only reflected indignation, and he flew quickly to inform Rupert of the scene, and impress him with the truth of his own commentary on it.

The other persons present at the scene passed an anxious interval between the words of Eberhard and his appointed hour for the promised and wished-for confession. Erilda rose early on the morrow; but her lord entreated that until noon, "the hour when," as he said, "his heart's forebodings of a detested consanguinity were to be confirmed or dispelled," he might be left alone, nor intruded on by any of the anxious or curious visitors. She promised strict obedience, and he was left, as he desired, to his own thoughts.

The morning waned, and Count Eberhard

was seen taking his slow and solitary way into the intricate paths of the wood, as was his wont, to prepare himself, as all observers concluded, for the approaching hour of noon. The expanse of heaven was cloudless. Its deep intensity of blue was so clear and so exquisitely bright, that it seemed as though the arduous vision might have pierced its unfathomed depths. No breeze stirred the grass, nor moved the light shadows of tree or herb. The thin-curling smoke rose up in a straight column to the sky. The swallows glided past on languid wings. The fig's broad leaves hung flaccid. The gasping throats of the singing birds gave out a faint and trembling tone. Heat ruled the hours. It was now burning noon; the old count was nowhere to be seen; and the gathering vassals, together with the members of the family and the household, press in anxious throngs towards the path which he had been observed to take. Alarm began to fly among the crowd. They broke away in straggling groups, and their loud halloos were soon heard breaking from all quarters of the wood.

Freda chose her path alone, in the direction of a shaded grotto, which she knew to be a fa-

vourite retreat of her grandsire. Scarcely had she entered the deep glen in which this solitary spot stood, when a shriek broke through the woods from her well-distinguished voice, of a tone so piercing that it silenced the shouting groups and filled all with the horrid conviction of some dire calamity. The terror-stricken hearers rushed from every direction towards that of the sound, whose meaning they panted yet trembled to discover. Bursting through the brush-wood which obstructed the way, the first comers had just reached the grotto's mouth, when they saw Freda stretched senseless on the earth, and, prostrate within the grot, the body of Count Eberhard bathed in blood. Death, but not natural death, was stamped on his pale face and convulsed features; and closer examination discovered three wounds close to his heart. It was evidently a practised arm that wrought the death-blows on that vital spot. But the trained murderer had met a subborn resistance from the brave old man. A furious struggle had marked the ground. His garments were torn as though he had fought away his life. One hand was deeply gashed from a probable effort to wrench

the blade from his assassin's hand. The other held fast clenched a lock of black hair, snatched convulsively from his head. Such was the picture that met the view.

Horror seemed to have congealed the observers, and for awhile no hand ventured to touch the dead body, or lift up Freda to recovered sense. At length however they raised her from the earth, while a few, with nerves more firmly strung than the rest, bore out the corpse, and they moved along towards the castle in sad procession, blood-stains marking their route. Reports of the dreadful discovery soon reached the castle. The shocked household poured forth in breathless haste; but outstripping all comers, were two, who rushed on in that desperate speed which urges the hope-bereft sufferer to what he knows for inevitable ruin. It was thus that Erilda and her husband came on. She flung a volume-speaking glance of agony upon the bleeding corpse—then sprang forward and clasped the still insensible Freda in her arms. Pressed to the natural home of her mother's bosom, the girl awoke. Her first wandering gaze seemed to fix on no particular object. The first that

caught it was her father, leaning over her with a woe-struck expression in his looks. Instantly the repetition of the horrid scream, before so shocking to the hearers, but now more faint, as if it were but the echo of the former which had lain until then in her bosom's depths, broke from her, and at the same moment she exclaimed, "Oh! murderer!—father!" and then closed her eyes and turned aside as though his presence were intolerable.

"Great Heavens!" cried her sire, raising his hands towards heaven; "she raves in phrensy—she knows not what she says, nor whom she sees! Oh, God! who hast snatched my father in thine anger, in mercy spare my child!"

Her eyes again reopened—again fixed on him—again shot forth rays of frantic brilliancy—while "murderer, and father!" were still her anguished exclamations. The startled concourse, recovering from their first affrighted amazement, no longer searched for evidence in the gaping wounds of the dead count. A burst of light seemed at once to break on them. The scene of the preceding evening—the promised revelation, which might perhaps have involved truths of

some damning import to him most affected in its bearing—the morning's privacy self-sought by him on whom all eyes were now fixed, against whom all hands were ready to be raised,—all was seen with one glance of reverting conviction, and each is satisfied that son, impostor, parricide, were identified together in the person of Rudolf of the Hartz!

From the stupefaction which first overwhelmed them, the crowd now sprang to furious agitation. Fiercely vehement to gather the truth, they questioned Freda, and hearkened with impatient fury to the short sad tale sobbed forth by the child in the unhesitating candour of youth. "As I approached the grotto I saw my grandsire's bleeding body stretched on the earth—my father, muffled in his cloak, stood beside it—he said nothing, but looked pale, and frowned—he held a red-bladed dagger in his hand—I thought he laughed horridly as he saw me sinking down—I know nothing farther."

"Enough! enough! Too much for human nature! Oh, monstrous! horrible!" and such like expressions burst spontaneously from the throng, who rushed round the unresisting culprit;

and while some clamoured for instant justice and strove to immolate him on the spot, the less inflamed majority succeeded in preserving him for the vengeance of the offended laws. He was soon bound firmly, dragged away to the neighbouring town, and plunged, as a loathed criminal, into its deepest prison cell.

For three days and nights he lay in the living burial of his solitude, while proofs and preparations for trial and execution were making. Left to brood on his coming fate, no sound fell on his ear to tell the tread of time. So deep did his dungeon lie in earth, that the ponderous bell of his prison, which flung its mighty tone for leagues over the surrounding country, failed to reach him. His aching eyes vainly strove to catch a glimpse of light when the thick door opened to admit his food—for though the broad radiance pains the vision, as when the lazy sunbeams crawl on some less hideous cell, still the blessed smile of day gilds even the links of slavery's chain. But the splendid mockery came not on him!

And turning our contemplation for awhile from the captive, let us fix it on her who walks abroad

mitted to the court of trial, gazed on the dignified mien and haughty demeanour of the culprit, but shrank back as he was led along, from the touch of his very garments, while the rattling of his chains made them quake with fear. A gathering horror crept through the hall. A total stillness reigned around, broken only by the clank of the fetters as the prisoner moved his shackled limbs, or by the hollow echoings which rang outside, from the hammers with which the workmen fastened the planks and beams of the scaffold.

The process of trial, as was too common in criminal matters during the feudal times, was prompt. Ere the opening forms were begun the minds of the judges were made up, and the anticipated sentence already ran through the throng. Every one knew the proofs to be adduced, and no one dreamt of sifting evidence or reconciling discrepancies. In an age of blood acquittal was but disappointment, and the sublime maxim of holy writ on which the theory of our own law is founded was then wholly overlooked or despised. But in the present case the most sceptical were satisfied. Guilt seemed as fully established as the broad light of day. The

blood-stiffened braid of black hair was of the very shade of the prisoner's. The murderer's foot-prints in the turf were exactly the same as his. Other circumstantial proofs have been already noticed; and it was agreed by all that sufficient time was allowed between the perpetration of the murder and the assassin's escape by the winding ways through the wood towards the castle, from which he was seen running with Erilda on the alarm being given. These were in themselves evidences sufficient. But when the trembling Freda was led along into the court, pale and in tears, drooping her lovely head like a withered lily, the loud sighs and sobs of the beholders—all unheard by her—were quickly followed by murmurs of vengeance and calls for judgement. Her presence was conclusive proof.

The prisoner had hitherto maintained a total silence. But when he saw this last and loveliest witness, he struck his forehead with his clenched hand, and deeply groaning, exclaimed "Fate is too strong for me!" He closed his eyes for a moment, and his head sank on his breast. It was but for one moment, for in the next he sprang up, as if indignant at the complaint

thus wrung from him. His pale eyes beamed in the seeming lustre of suffering virtue, and, like an arch fixed firmer by every increase of pressure, he gained strength from each additional load of obloquy and wrong. The awe-struck observers gazed on him, marvelling how so fiend-like a being could thus bear the aspect of a demi-god. Freda, obeying the commands of the judges, began to answer their questions in the words of her formerly-told recital; but the impatience of the people would not wait for this, to their minds, unnecessary formality. Yells and threats burst out all around; and the judges, hurried away by the violence of the crowd and the sympathy of their own excited passions, pronounced the sentence of death, which decreed agonies of torture and excesses of ignominy to the doomed body of the culprit, that make men of the present times shudder and blush, for what their species was in those dark and bloody days. The prisoner heard the sentence and the infuriate shouts by which it was hailed, but he stood unmoved, like a rock lashed by the frantic waves, and as calm as that wide tract of ocean which remains perpetually still, though

thunder roars and lightnings flash without cessation above its waves.

The headsman and his assistants laid their coarse hands on their prey, and with triumphant delight they were about to lead him to the adjoining room where the rack stood ready—the crowd poured out towards this place of exhibition—the judges prepared to quit the judgment-seat—when, rising above the many discordant sounds, a loud voice was heard, crying out in piercing tones, "Mercy!—justice!—he is innocent!"

The interruption was so unlooked for, and the assertion so startling, that curiosity and wonder for a moment overmastered the eager longing for blood and the desire of vengeance. Free passage was made for a man who burst through the throng, and it was soon discovered that it was Rupert of Stalbach who forced his onward way, and threw himself at the feet of the judges. "Mercy for me! and justice for him!" cried the suppliant, with convulsed voice, while his haggard looks and blood-shot eyes bore witness to his past and present suffering; "For him against whom hell has worked in vain. No!

It could not be that truth, honour, and innocence should fall beneath the stroke of infamy. Off with his dishonouring chains! Read in his noble countenance if he be a parricide and an impostor! Wonder at if ye must, but also obey the words of Heaven, speaking truth and fact through me its unworthy instrument! And pity me if ye will while urged on by my remorse thus to load my own name with infamy! Oh, Harold —deeply injured as thou hast been—fix not thine eyes thus terribly upon me! their last glance drove me to desperation—they now fill me with despair! It was not I that dealt the blow—no, there, there he stands, whose parricidal arm struck down thy father and his own—while I stood aloof, as criminal but less bloody!"

With unsteady hand he here pointed to a man whose towering height made him easily recognized among the crowd, but whose slouched cap and whose mantle held high had hitherto concealed his face from observation. Those around him shrunk back at Rupert's words; but a better spirit encouraging some, they sprang upon him as he attempted to escape, and in spite of his vigorous resistance they overpowered him

and dragged his concealment aside. One glance broke the long mystery! Judges, gaolers, guards, and every individual of the promiscuous crowd, threw with wild wonder their looks from this new captive to him whose death-march had for a moment been halted—then back again with a new intensity of amaze—turning first from the demoniac villain denounced by Rupert, to his living likeness Sir Harold of Sternfels—and then back from him to Rudolf of the Hartz!

Order and form were completely overturned in the assemblage. The first impulse was now to list to Rupert's completion of the confession, so incoherently begun, that the darkest part of the mystery might be explained. Broken in upon by sobs and sighs which seemed to ease his overloaded breast, the repentant reprobate proceeded in his connectless, but still convincing revelation. His first efforts went to extenuate his own early errors. He spoke with a bitter penitence of what was past; and a flood of tears rushed out as he alluded to the long-enjoyed friendship of those whom he had so successfully laboured to render wretched and to destroy. "At length," said he, "when I had reached

the very brink of ruin, Sir Harold returned alive and well, to snatch from me the enjoyment of that inheritance on which I felt myself on the point of becoming possessed. My mind, prepared for any delusion that seemed to stay off for ever so little the impending ruin, eagerly received the notion that it was indeed an impostor that had returned to Sternfels. I attempted to dislodge him; and even then, when struck almost dumb by that single glance, which would have brought conviction to any one to whom it did not at the same time bring despair, I refused to admit or own the truth. When justice even decided against my accusations and established his identity, I only became more wilfully blind. Then came revenge, dire progeny of shame and rage, and I revelled for awhile, but yet guiltless, in that dark delight, the worst of man's worst thoughts. It was at this crisis of my career that yonder miscreant sought and found me. He found me, alas! ready moulded for his purpose —ready to enter into complicity with his most hideous crimes—but still not daring to do the last fell deed."——

"Peace, babbling and recreant wretch!" ex-

claimed, in a voice of horrid strength, the pre-eminent villain of the strange drama now being acted, "Peace! nor mention deeds which even in name make you tremble. For me these themes are more fit; and by me they shall be fitly treated; for I have laughed through life at the puling distinctions of morality, and never yet bent my knee to man or God. My heart has been of flint, girded with a belt of ice—as hard as it was cold; a suitable whetstone to the iron-beaked bird of Hecla! Thus nature threw me forth, and my deeds may tell if I ever strove to thwart nature. Death, I see, is now in waiting, but ere I quit this life I must leave some records of myself that my fame may not be belied. First, know ye then, I am sprung from no word-hallowed and time honoured source. My mother was the ruined victim of him whom I only knew to be my father that I might hate him, for her sake and my own. Vice and guilt were my heritage and were close grafted in my nature. I owed all this to my father. Was not the debt duly paid? Is not the account duly balanced? I sprang from him —by me he fell! He gave me life and infamy—

I struck him down! Ere I could lisp the name of father, mine had abandoned me to despair. He married, and yonder wretch, my twice-escaped victim, was born to brand me the deeper with disgrace. My mother loved me with boundless warmth. She lavished learning, accomplishments, and gold upon me; I asked not how the latter became hers. Bad and bold, I knew my shame, for her first lessons were those of loathing and abhorrence to the name of sire and brother.

"My mother died. Friendless and without resources but those of my own mind, I plunged on my career, and followed it through scenes too varied to picture now. *He* came across my path! The steel that had so long and so well served me failed of its office when turned against his hated heart. He fell under my blows, but not mortally hurt. I arose from the fight, a prisoner, with the alternative of slavery as a Christian or wealth and dignities as a Turk. I did not hesitate. I became a renegade to Christian forms. I knew no faith, and cross and crescent were to me alike. Believing my victim to

have perished among the noteless slain, for his body could no where be found, I sunk in indolence. No thought of him came on my voluptuous course; and luxury and love bent their subtle allurements to turn me aside from the best part of my design.

"Years rolled along. A Christian slave first brought to me the news of Harold of Strenfels having escaped from a long captivity, and of his being returned to his happy home. The scathing tidings fell like lightning on my scorched heart. I knew no peace until I set out once again to Germany to mar, at least, the bliss that I was not destined to share. This slave had also informed me of the great struggle against the newly returned lord of Sternfels by his greedy kinsman. To him, therefore, I first addressed myself on reaching the scene of my few but not wholly fruitless exploits. Taking advantage of his first astonishment at my miraculous resemblance, I opened all my plans, and dwelt mainly on his own fall from fame and importance to odium and misery. His rankling mind was well fitted for my purpose. We calculated our expected gains, and arranged our plot.

"Our first notion was to send Harold alone to his grave; but the death of the old man held out a double prospect of ambition and revenge. My coward partner dared not be the complete villain he wished to be! He refused to strike the blow—I struck it, and had Harold died as we hoped by—justice!—I had soon appeared as the true heir, and divided the spoils with the base recreant who has betrayed me.

"One circumstance seemed to seal our success, the coming of yonder pale-faced girl to mark me in my hour of filial vengeance. My heart leaped upwards in ardent longing to plunge my weapon in her breast, but I staid the blow that she might be the surest evidence against her father. And when I came here to glut my eyes on his agonies, I little dreamt of this ending to all. But his escape is dearly bought. No sire to chant a hymn of triumph—his wife frantic, it may be dying—and the poisoned barb of blasted hope festering in his heart!

"I have spoken! Let me be now known for what I was. I stood alone in the world, hating it, and now die its unrelenting foe. But one act of justice shall close and dignify my course

—there! to thy dastard heart, caitiff!" And with the utterance of these words, so abruptly ending his speech, he darted through the unsuspecting throng full upon Rupert, seized him by the hair, with one hand, and with the other plunged a dagger in his breast. The poniard felt its fleshy sheath—the writhing man gasped in short agony—the blood mounted to his throat, and his glazed eyes upturned in death.

The desperate murderer next raised the reeking blade to strike at his own heart; but no, his race of blood was run! The rushing throng arrested his arm, and the final blow was left for justice to strike. The rack was at hand. He was dragged out, and fast-descending strokes of torture were plainly heard—but no groan came with them to tell that they fell on mortal form.

And now loud shouts were heard outside, and a female figure conducted by the joyous crowd came rapidly on, the flush of fever making her eyes more bright, and heightening her natural charms. It may well be guessed that it was Erilda whom nought could hinder from the half delirious bliss of hurrying from her fevered couch, to hail with fond embrace the triumph of

him whom her searching glances soon discover. He sprang forward to meet her salutation, and flung his still shackled arms around her, while she strained the double captive in folds of love stronger than the fetters by which he was yet for a moment bound.

THE TRAGEDY

OF

THE TRUENFELS.

A LEGEND WITHOUT A DATE.

In the neighbourhood of this dreary spot lived an old knight named Sir Balther of the Mount, with Liba, his only daughter. This daughter was so lovely and so amiable, that several of the young nobles, whose families then possessed, and whose castles ornamented the district of the Seven Mountains, entered into brisk rivalry for the possession of her hand. But Sir Balther had promised it to Sibert of Ulenthal, and Liba had shown no objection to the match. Had her father indeed destined her for the oldest, ugliest, and most ill-tempered of her suitors, this pattern of filial obedience had not murmured, however she might have mourned. It may well then be believed with what pleasure she confirmed her parent's choice of the handsomest, kindest, and bravest youth of the country.

Sir Balther, who was proud and fierce, like most of his brother feudatories, had been for years in constant enmity with the Archbishop of Cologne, of whom he was the vassal. His fiery spirit lost no opportunity of raising fresh quarrels, and his haughty temper neither brooked injury nor concealed anger. One day, during the access of one of his frequent fits of enmity against

the prelate, he entertained at his castle a company of friends, all deeply imbued with his own feelings. Young Sibert alone was absent from the feast, from some accidental cause.

As the heating effects of large potations of Rhine-wine fermented the blood of the inflammable company, explosions of rage took place, all directed against the absent archbishop, and destined to be too fatally followed up.

"How," cried Schott of Grunstein, "could mortal man, much less a spurred and belted knight, submit to this exaction? To claim my kine, my sheep, the very lambs yet unweaned! To force from me at once both lay tribute and clerical tithes! By Heavens, it is too bad! It must not, it cannot be borne!"

"No—no more than his insult to my honour," exclaimed Hugo of Wolfsbratten, "slighted by him in the very church! The torch which I held in the procession refused his blessing, because it was carried by *me!* Me, whose blood is, methinks, more pure than his whose shield bears quarterings"——

"Tut, tut, brother," interrupted the old lord of Swalbach, "what is this grievance com-

pared to mine? No priest, no prince, no pope even could bear attaint to the honour of Wolfsbratten—but has not yon proud prelate torn my very squire from my protection? And does he not lie this hour imprisoned in Cologne?"

"Ay, and has he not lowered my banner from the cathedral choir, and whitewashed the wall in the place where it hung?" vociferated Ulrich von Zwammelthorp, at the same time striking the table with his clenched fist, so as to make goblets, flasks, and glasses dance in a fashion that was certainly common enough to the drinking-bouts of those and later days.

The climax of outrage and indignity announced by the last speaker threw the listeners completely off their centre. It was bad enough to distrain cattle for dues, to refuse a benediction to the torch of an obnoxious intruder, to imprison the roaring partizan of a turbulent freebooter; but to sweep away the cobweb from a banner of nobility, and whitewash the filth which it had for half a century concealed and fostered, was indeed too bad! The boisterous conspirators—for such they were to a man—broke all bounds of decorum or prudence, and uttered the most

uncompromising threats of vengeance. A dozen different plans for carrying those threats into execution were proposed by as many different voices; and all were confounded by an uproar of feudal clamour. One talked of a public manifesto against the various instances of wrong. Another insisted on a declaration of rights. A third recommended a league of the injured lords, offensive and defensive. A fourth urged an immediate levy of men, and a war of desperation.

Sir Balther, as in duty bound, listened with as much patience as he could command to the outbursts of his choleric and rebellious guests; and having, from his situation as host, been able to preserve his head rather more clear than the rest, he had sense enough to see that all these parallel proposals, though tending towards the same object, were none of them coming or able to come to the point. He therefore made a signal for silence, but that obtained little success. He next roared, at the topmost pitch of his voice, a request to be heard. But his proposal was drowned among the rest. He next devised a plan which succeeded in stopping for a moment the mouths of the party. He filled his glass,

and raised it, intimating that he was about to propose a toast; and while all drained the last drops of their goblets to the animating sentiment of "Death to our archbishop and arch enemy!" the president seized the opportunity to deliver himself of the following pithy speech:—

"Brother knights, my very esteemed guests, ye are all but a pack of asses! What do you, and I, and all of us want? Revenge? How is it to be obtained? By treaties, and leagues, and proclamations? No—but by action, instant, immediate, desperate action! Our persecuting enemy is this very day absent from Cologne—this very hour at Urbach, consecrating the new church—will be this very night on his way back to the strong hold of his tyranny. Shall he ever reach it alive? A hundred bold men-at-arms can overpower his unprepared guard, taken by surprise, and probably half drunk. Shall the archbishop then ever reach home alive?"

"Never, never! We swear it, we swear it!" was the solemn answer, uttered in full deep chorus; and every one instantly sobered by the terrible solemnity of the pledge, they hastened off, to gather each his quota of followers, agree-

ing on a certain place of rendezvous—where all in due time met.

That night the Archbishop of Cologne was a corpse. Waylaid and surprised, his escort made a feeble resistance; and he found no mercy, having rarely shewed any to his enemies.

The emperor for the time being, often the just avenger of crime, as often the upholder of wrong, but in most cases moved by their direct or indirect influence on his own prerogatives, saw in this transaction a flagrant violation of law, justice, and authority, and resolved to make a terrible example of the offenders. Within a few weeks from the night of the archbishop's murder almost every one of the confederates died on the scaffold, or were hung on gibbets erected on the scene of their crime. The confessions of several threw the chief blame on Sir Balther. He had not yet been made amenable to justice—or vengeance, with which it is so often confounded. On hearing of the arrest and execution of his accomplices, he put his castle into the best state of defence; and as he hoped for no mercy, he resolved to sell his life as dearly as he could.

No one, whether a friend or foe of the un-

fortunate archbishop or his unlucky enemies, was more shocked or grieved at these events than young Sibert of Ulenthal. He thanked Heaven and his patron saint full many a time that he had been absent from the fatal party at which the plot was laid, and at his being thus preserved, to save at least his beloved Liba from the destruction to which her too guilty father was doomed. He repaired to the court of the emperor, obtained an audience, threw himself at his feet, and implored his imperial permission to accompany the force destined for the attack and destruction of Sir Balther's castle, and to bear away harmless the innocent daughter to whom he was affianced, although the utmost excess of ruin and certain death was inviolably decreed against the father.

It would be long to tell and tedious to describe the preparations made for the attack of Sir Balther's almost impregnable retreat, impregnable at least in days before the invention of gunpowder allowed the blasting mine to spring beneath security's feet, or the bursting shower of shells and rockets to fall on the doomed heads of the besieged. But many a bold squadron and

platoon was marched forward to the enterprise. Machines of powerful effect battered the castle walls, and javelins, stones, and arrows, did great destruction on the small but desperate garrison. Sir Balther on his part was not idle, and much slaughter was done on the lines of the exasperated imperialists.

The bold Sir Balther was constantly exposed, as he led on sorties against his assailants or reconnoitred their approaches from his towers and battlements. He was lucky enough to escape even without a wound; but one day he received a shock greater than any that could be effected by the worst missile on perceiving young Sibert of Ulenthal in the enemy's ranks. He could scarcely believe his eyes; and to confirm their evidence he called Liba to his side. She too saw this apparent proof of her lover's worse than desertion—for his presence there spoke breach of honour as well as of affection. Sir Balther's bold nerves became more firmly braced at sight of what he thought a new enemy. The gentle Liba was differently affected. She sunk insensible in her father's arms, was carried in

that state to her chamber, and only revived to the full conviction of her misery.

In the mean while young Sibert, filled with new hope at the partial sight of his mistress, advanced towards the walls with outstretched arms, and endeavoured to express by his gestures that he was come to save her and bear her from the dreadful fate that impended over the other inmates of the castle. Sir Balther allowed him to approach within certain range of an arrow, and seizing the bow from the hands of an archer close by him, he discharged the flying weapon with unerring aim.

"That for thy traitorous heart!" cried he, as the bow-string twanged and the arrow cut through the air.

"Thank Heaven, he has it!" was the next exclamation as the weapon too surely struck its mark. Sibert was carried off to the besiegers' camp. Sir Balther took care speedily to inform the wretched Liba of his exploit. Her despair was now complete. And the fury of the contest between besiegers and besieged reached a greater height than ever.

Within ten days from this event the castle was reduced to the last extremity. The scaling ladders of the foe were fairly planted against the walls. One after another its works were carried; and at length on one night of gloom and storm the very body of the place was in the power of the imperialists. A final assault made them masters of all; and slaughter, pillage, and devastation were to be seen throughout, by the blaze of the fire, which in every part consumed the massive building.

The beautiful Liba would willingly have met death at the hands of the foe. But she dared not venture to encounter their libertine fury. Half dressed, with flowing hair, and trembling steps, she fled therefore to the refuge of her father's protection. Traversing corridors and halls which resounded with the shouts of the victors, and where at every step she encountered the dead or the dying glaring in the fierce light of the conflagration, she at last reached a distant court yard and there perceived her father desperately fighting with his last few adherents against fearful odds. Just as she was darting to his side, to share the fate he braved, her arm was

forcibly caught in the grasp of a man and in a moment he drew her to him and clasped her to his breast.

"Oh! mercy, mercy!" cried she. "Strike me to the heart, but spare my honour!"

"Liba, dost thou not know me?" murmured a voice which even then spoke not in vain to her heart's sympathies. It was Sibert, who but partly recovered from his wound, but still faint and ailing, had left the camp and braved the perils of the assault, unarmed save by the inspiring passion on which he reckoned to bear him safe.

"Sibert! not dead? Oh Heaven pity me! my brain wanders. They told me thou wert dead—killed by my father's hand!"

"No, Liba, I live for thee and love. All may now be well. Thy father's cruel weapon rankled in my breast, but thy image was there before it to neutralize the barbed point. Now fly, fly, my beloved! I am not, as thou seest, an enemy. I have the emperor's full pardon for thee—his *commands* to snatch thee hence. Turn, Liba, turn with me from this horrid scene."

"And my father?"

"Oh, name him not in such an hour as this! The ban is on his head—nothing may save him—and all that aid, abet, or linger near him are doomed to inevitable ruin!"

"Then welcome ruin! Farewell, Sibert, for ever!" exclaimed Liba, springing from the ineffectual grasp of her distracted lover, and gaining with a bound the side of her desperate parent.

"Ah, my child! my dear daughter!" cried the old warrior, forgetting even his furious revenge in beholding her whom he had quite given up for lost; and he dropped his sword's point and threw wide the arm that held his protecting shield that he might freely receive her as she threw herself on his breast. The very ruffians who had assailed him, reeking with blood and hot for slaughter, paused awhile from their fell work, and gazed on the affecting scene of filial and paternal love.

"Now welcome death indeed! Oh it is happiness to escape disgrace and die thus with thee, my father!" exclaimed Liba, hanging on Sir Balther's neck and embracing him wildly.

"Take them alive!" cried the commander of

the foes, who now prepared to resume their attack. "Let no weapon touch them on peril of your heads! Torture and the gallows for the old man—but the girl is my prize!"

"Fly, father! Dearest father, fly!" exclaimed Liba, as Sir Balther, throwing his shield before him, rushed once more upon his enemies. She clung to his arm and prevented his advance, still imploring him to fly.

"Fly, girl! Where? There is no safety but in desperation and death! Look at the flames that everywhere burst out? Come on, cowards! come on!"

"Father, father, you see they will not fight with you. Oh, plunge your sword into my breast sooner than let me fall into their hands!"

"That I cannot do, by Heavens!" replied the old chieftain. "Thou art at this moment the living portrait of thy mother. I cannot kill *her* child!" and he once more caught his daughter in his arms, and strained her with a fierce emotion to his breast.

"Oh fly, then; there is yet an opening down there to the vaults!" cried Liba, endeavouring to lead him to the archway, through which a

narrow passage seemed yet left between the flame and smoke that burst out at either side.

"Away then, away, ere I repent me of my own dishonour, which now I prefer to thine!" exclaimed the father, at the same time flinging his shield and sword with desperate force at the group of enemies who stood before him, their weapons pointed out to keep him at bay. In the same instant, snatching the cloak from a dead body at his foot, he wrapped it round Liba, and before the lookers on had time to recover from their amaze, both father and daughter disappeared in the open archway.

"Pursue them, pursue—and bring back the girl alive!" cried the hoarse voice of the commander; but his orders were unavailing. Just as the men rushed forward the beams and masonry of the archway fell with a loud crash. A volume of smoke, flame, and dust rose thickly up; and no one doubted but that the chieftain and his daughter had perished.

But fate had not quite let fall its heavy hand on the destitute pair. Forcing their way along, they reached the subterranean vaults, but not both unharmed. Liba, securely wrapped in the dead

soldier's cloak, was unscathed by the fire through which she passed. Sir Balther, without such shelter, was grievously scorched. His eyes felt as though portions of the flame had settled in them. His agony was great; and but for his daughter's sake he had lain down at once and waited for death, which had now been welcome come in what shape it might.

Wandering on at random, for Sir Balther could not see his way through the subterraneous windings which he knew so well, and Liba was quite ignorant of their intricate paths, they at length reached an outlet. It admitted them into the deep forest which surrounded the castle at a short distance; and the flames from the burning pile allowed the half sinking and half maddened girl to see sufficiently before her and prevent any accident to her father or herself from the unequal and obstructed soil. Worn out at length with exertion of body and mind, she sank on the earth, and slept in spite of all her suffering, her agonized parent watching her—yet almost hoping for her sake and his own that she might never more awake, for were her sorrows ended by death, he felt that then he too might die.

The songs of birds, the bright smiles of the morning sun, the pure breath of the early breeze, the fragrance of opening flowers, formed the combination of natural delights which broke on Liba's awakening senses. For a moment all seemed as if she lay in paradise. But memory is to wretchedness what conscience is to guilt—both ever ready to drag their victims back to the view of what the one has done and the other suffered. 'Tis the happy alone who revel in oblivion. Even virtue is denied the enjoyment, if sorrow has once crossed its path.

And Liba, now alive to a full consciousness of her own woes, found her only chance of temporary forgetfulness in the contemplation of her father's desolate and dreadful state. Roused to exertion by the sacred duty of solacing his sufferings, she led him farther into the forest, gathered plants whose soothing qualities were known to her and applied them to his burning eyes, sought water to quench his thirst, made a bed of leaves and moss on which he might strive to repose, and gathered wild fruits and berries to allay the cravings of nature. For utterly de-

spairing as were both parent and child, they still clung to life, though had death been offered by other hands than their own they would each have joyfully embraced it.

For several days they thus existed; having discovered in the wilderness a cave that sheltered them from the wind and rain, and secured them from all danger of discovery. In this state of living burial, they continued, Sir Balther being wholly blind, and Liba exhausting every means of subsistence afforded by the wild vicinage of their sanctuary.

Forced to extend her wanderings in search of these scanty supplies, she one day descried the figure of a man pensively leaning against a tree. Terror kept her motionless for a moment, and fixed her gaze upon him. It was Sibert, who pursued in almost utter hopelessness his daily task of seeking the fugitives, whom he alone persisted in believing not to have been destroyed,—true to that instinct (so often an infatuation) that will not let lovers loose their hold of hope.

Liba's first impulse was to call on Sibert's

name and fling herself into his arms. But an instant's thought repelled the natural suggestion of her heart. "No," thought she, "he at least shall not be involved in our ruin—he shall not be sacrificed by the contagion of our touch!" And retiring unperceived, she retraced her steps to the dreary cavern which was now her only home.

Thus had she three times voluntarily renounced the beloved object of her pure passion, on grounds of as pure principle; first, in the belief of his infidelity to her father's cause; secondly, rather than abandon that parent to secure her own safety; and lastly, to avoid compromising this adored lover in the destruction to which they were doomed. Such generous devotion surely merited reward. Let us hope that it received an ample share,—but it was not on this earth!

Wound up by this stretch of forbearance to that state of overstrained buoyancy which the martyrs of virtue fancy to be happiness, Liba returned to her father, with a light step, a beaming countenance, and a beating heart. Her

fancied triumph over the natural impulses of her heart was soon however sinking into despondency. But any token of despair was for the instant averted by her father's proposing, for the first time, to quit his retreat and breathe the open air. Taking Liba's hand in his, he said, "I know not how it is with me to-day, my child, but I feel a something I cannot describe which calls me into the sight of heaven. It is as though a feeling from the skies (which, alas! I must never see) urged me forth. I am irresistably impelled to obey this call. It is like a noiseless summons from on high. Come then, Liba, lead me into the sunshine, though I may not know its brightness! The day is clear and serene, is it not?"

"'Tis sultry, my father, rather than serene. But the blue sky is only disfigured by one dark cloud which will no doubt pass quickly away."

"Lead me then to the blessed beams of light, that I may feel them warm my chilled heart once more."

"This way then, my father—this way to the lone gray rock which stands singly in the forest,

and whence one may see the blue waters of the Rhine—oh! forgive me, my father—I forgot thy misfortune!"

"Nay, nay, Liba, I see them too—as I see thee, my girl, in the deep clear stream of memory, bright and clear and pure—come on, come on to the sunshine!"

When they emerged from the gloomy thicket Sir Balther felt the sun's rays, and turned up his sightless balls as if longing to see the day-god which thus revived him. "Art thou safe here, Liba?" asked he, after a moment's pause. "Is there no chance of some straggler of our persecutors wandering this way? Hast thou seen no one on thy walks in search of food?"

"No enemy, father, has met my view since the fatal night of the assault."

"Then hast thou seen no one, my child, for to a proscribed and ruined man like me all become enemies even if they were friends before!"

Liba had now reached the rock, and her father sat down on a projecting fragment, basking in the genial rays which fell so warmly there. In a moment the sky was overcast—the dark

and solitary cloud remarked by Liba had reached the place where she and Sir Balther sat, and threw its deep shadow down upon them. At the same time a few large drops fell heavily from it. These were instantly followed by a flash of lightning and a simultaneous crash that told how terribly close was the thunderbolt. Both father and daughter fell dead to the earth.

Sibert of Ulenthal was close to the spot. He had caught a view of Liba when she thought she escaped unobserved; had tracked her to the cavern; had thence followed her and her father through the thicket, overheard their short conversation, and was on the point of springing forward to throw himself before them and announce the emperor's pardon, of which he was the bearer. Stunned for a few seconds by the fatal flash, but rushing forward as soon as he recovered his presence of mind, he saw two corpses where he a minute before had marked the two living beings in whose fate his whole happiness was centered. Sir Balther was blackened and burned. Liba shewed no visible mark of Heaven's wrath. For a moment her lover believed her still to live. She lived in immortality, but lay in death.

The tomb and the chapel were erected by the orders of Sibert on the site of this deep tragedy. The body of Liba was deposited in the tomb. Sibert took possession of the little chapel and an adjoining building, where he passed the rest of his desolate career in mourning for her death and preparing for his own.

THE PRISONER

OF

THE PFALZ.

THE PRISONER

OF

THE PFALZ.

One of the most striking, if not the most picturesque, objects of the voyage of the Rhine is the fort-like building called the Pfalzgrafenstein, or, more commonly and briefly, the Pfalz. It is situated on an island nearly central in the river, between the towns of Canb and Baccarach; and the stream presenting at this point one of those frequent illusions which so diversify its beauties, this tower has been sometimes designated the Castle in the Lake. Such indeed is the appearance of the river in this place; and the stillness of land and water, the encircling hills, and impenetrable woods, give an air of solemn security, well suited to the purposes for which the building was employed during many an age; namely, as a prison at times for state

criminals, but more usually as a place for another species of *confinement*—that of the successive countesses palatines, whose accouchements, in order to give the heir a legal title to his inheritance, were to be there effected. This regulation, which now appears but an absurd ordinance, was no doubt connected with some reasons of state, if we may so dignify the coarse and capricious motives which influenced the chieftains of feudality.

High above the river, and looking down from a rugged battlement of rocks behind the town of Canb, are the ruins of Gutenfels, an old castle, which some centuries ago bore the title of *Cube*, but it was new named to its present appellation, in compliment to the Countess Guda, of the ancient line of Nuringen, an heiress of surpassing beauty, who had not only the honour of softening for awhile the hard-hearted, and becoming the wife of Hermann, Count Palatine, but of making a conquest of a still more elevated lover, if at least the romantic traditions of the Rhine speak truly. But the honour of an alliance with princedom was dearly purchased by the drawback on happiness sequent on a union with a

haughty, violent, and despotic man, double her own age, without sympathy for her virtues or soul for her charms; and whose only aim in his choice was the pride of possessing the most lovely woman of her day, or some passing desire that rather degraded than ennobled its object.

For three years after her marriage, the countess bore her hard fate without a murmur, for conscience told her she had alone herself to blame. But she hushed her self-reproaches even, by recollecting the motives which had urged her to consent to the match. In the innocence and inexperience of youth, she had believed that the happiness of her suitor had depended on it; and she had herself formed no attachment at the time which would have taught her feelings the difference between the spurious passion of the palatine, and that real one, to compare it with which is blasphemy against the heart's divinity. But never had a woman in her station, or a wife so irreproachable, to bear such indignities of suspicion and jealousy as fell to the lot of Countess Guda. Privations of all kinds were forced on her. None of the enjoyments of high rank were allowed her, and the

delights of humble life were incompatible with it. Rarely seen by even her husband's courtiers or dependents, the fame of her beauty and her goodness spread nevertheless far and wide. She became the theme of many a lay of romantic eulogy, and several enthusiasts fancied themselves, in the fashion of the day, enamoured of one only known to them through the haze of an over-heated fancy. It was even reported that the emperor, whose romantic turn of mind caught readily at any new subject of excitement, had contrived to gain a stolen view of the all but imprisoned countess, and had become in consequence one of her most ardent admirers.

It was at least certain that about the time of this report a pressing invitation reached the castle of Stahleck, not far from Gutenfels, on the opposite bank of the Rhine, where the palatine resided, praying Count Hermann and his fair but unfortunate partner to repair to the imperial court on a visit, for which grand preparations were made, and every inducement to its acceptance held out. But in vain. The morose and jealous palatine, who had never himself sought honours or pleasures, was determined

that his wife should not risk the consequences which they too often bring in their train. Without confidence in himself, he could not have any in his wife, for the one is the offspring of the other; and doubt of her fidelity was (as it always is in like cases) a sure proof of consciousness in his own demerit. The imperial invitation, which an inferior prince could not directly refuse, was eluded under various frivolous pretexts; and the close guardianship of the countess was more rigorously than ever attended to by the special care of Ludwig, the palatine's younger brother, and the heir presumptive to his honours, for the ill assorted union had not been followed by the birth of any child. But in proportion as the seclusion of the hapless Guda became more and more severe, the sympathy she excited beyond the pale of her palace-prison increased, and numerous instances, which never came to her knowledge, proved how individual gallantry and still higher feelings were interested in her cause, while each new display of the kind on the part of strangers carried a fresh reproach to him who knew her best, and ought to have honoured and cherished her the most.

But all the retainers of the court of the palatine, who had opportunities of seeing the princess at all, were struck with and astonished by the sudden change which at this period took place in her manners and feelings. Instead of the placid but pensive endurance of ill which had hitherto characterised her, she became suddenly animated and cheerful, and her spirits seemed to rise in a ratio with the increase of the means pursued by her tyrants—for she had two—to keep them down. The conjectures of courtiers were not likely in those days, any more than they might be in our own, to give any interpretation favourable to morality or virtue. Some secret passion was imagined to be the only possible cause of such a magical change, and a circumstance ere long discovered turned suspicion into certainty, even in the minds of those most disposed to think well of the countess, or who had had courage enough to uphold her character before.

One evening when the sun had just sunk below the hills which rose high behind the palace of Stahleck, and the mountain woods began to throw down their mysterious shadows on the

broad river, Guda chose, as was her wont, to wander in the pleasure-grounds and gardens, as if to contrast her own gay and joyous bearing with the sadness of the melancholy hour. Whether solitude was her object we cannot now stop to inquire; but be that as it may, she was not left long to the lone indulgence of her fancy. She was now, as on most occasions, narrowly watched and closely followed. Ludwig, her unkind brother-in-law, and Hugo von Roth, his devoted creature, were both soon on her track; and ere long they reached the close neighbourhood of a bower where they had instant evidence of her presence, but in a way that startled while it delighted them.

Even these two anxious evil-wishers of the countess, and both therefore disposed to believe ill of her, were struck with amaze at hearing her empassioned conversation with a man, whose voice they knew not. Recovering themselves quickly, they approached still closer; and cautiously peeping through the foliage, they saw the intrusive interloper on the wedded privileges of the Count Valentine on one knee before Countess Guda, holding her hand in his, and

THE PRISONER

OF

THE PFALZ.

crime and denial! It is all very natural," said Ludwig, with a hoarse laugh of mockery; at the same time laying hold of the countess, as if to drag her prisoner to the palace.

"Off, unmannered and foul-spoken Ludwig!" exclaimed she, indignantly repelling him, and with a tone of more than usual spirit and command. "To my husband alone am I answerable, nor shall any hand but his dare to hold me captive."

"His hand, I hope, will deal thee prompt and exemplary punishment," said the ferocious Ludwig.

"Ah, Ludwig! 'tis a fiend-like inspiration that tells thee to long for my destruction, now more than ever."

"I know not what you mean, Countess Guda," retorted Ludwig, a keen air of curiosity tempering his former violence.

"Thou shalt know it!" said Guda, with an increasing animation of tone.

At this moment Hugo von Roth entered the bower, with a confused and hurried look. "Well, hast thou seized on him?" asked Ludwig.

"He has escaped," replied the minion.

"Sacred thunder!" (a very good popular oath in Germany and France to the present day) exclaimed Count Ludwig—"But you saw his face?"

"How could I, count, while his back was to me as he ran?"

"True! But did you not succeed in stopping him?"

"No," said Hugo, without hesitation; yet he nevertheless told a huge lie, in one little word. For he *had* succeeded in stopping the fugitive, and he knew him well. Why then did he not seize on him? Or *did* he seize him? might be here demanded, by any reader as curious as Count Ludwig. The answer is, he did seize him; but on discovering who it was he had seized, he let go his hold, as quickly as though he had caught hot iron—yet his hand was not seared, for it was not the devil he caught so firmly and released so soon.

The Count Palatine was exceeding wroth when he heard of the events relative to his wife's detection, and listened to his brother Ludwig's details of what they both called the *proofs* of her infidelity—the one from self-interest, the

other from jealousy, two motives which more than any other blind men to the truth, and, even when they see it, induce them to smother it. While the brothers devised together the fitting and safest punishment to inflict on the hapless, and as she maintained herself, the innocent Guda, every means were set on foot to discover her paramour. It was not long before a young knight was seized in an attempt to gain admission to the part of the palace where she was confined. He was instantly recognized as having been seen prowling about the precincts of the pleasure grounds on the evening of the fatal discovery; and was moreover notoriously heard to boast of his passion for the countess, in whose praise many verses, bad or indifferent, were found on his person. Nothing more was required. The young knight was hanged on a tree adjoining the garden. With almost his last words, he proclaimed the innocence of the countess.

"That will be satisfactory to the count," observed the officer who presided at the execution.

"Will it?" said the young knight. "Then to complete his comfort, tell him that had she been guilty I should have sworn *just the same.*"

"The words of a man of honour!" exclaimed the officer.

"And the sentiment of a pious Christian!" observed the priest. In the mean time the poor young knight hung by the neck till he was dead. His body was then cut down and thrown into the Rhine, amidst loud acclamations in honour of the Count Palatine's keen sense of justice. Hugo Von Roth never opened his mouth on the subject.

Count Ludwig, to make assurance surer than ever, and hurried on by his hatred of the countess, strenuously urged his brother, the palatine, to chop off his wife's head, as the best way he thought of cutting off all obstacles to his own inheritance. But the wily Von Roth soon made him understand that this would be the worst possible blow that could be struck against his interests; that another marriage might produce an heir to the palatine; and that the surest measure for Count Ludwig's succession was to have Guda safely incarcerated in some strong hold, until the course of nature removed the present incumbent from the possession of the place for which Count Ludwig panted. He acted

quickly on these suggestions, revoking all his former arguments for Guda's death, by representing to the palatine the odium it might bring to him, and at the same time suggesting that perpetual imprisonment would be a severer punishment to one, whose whole value for life was gone when that of her lover was ended.

Count Hermann willingly gave in to these last reasonings, for there was something within him which whispered strong objections to putting to death the wife of his bosom. He was not one of those monsters of history, so dead to every touch of feeling as to doom to the block the head which had lain upon his shoulder, in the early charms of virgin confidence. He was indeed, on recollections of such by-gone scenes, greatly tempted to believe her innocent and spare her altogether. But the equivocal speech of the dying knight threw him back upon his doubts and his jealousy, and a false sense of his honour, artfully acted on by Ludwig, made him fancy that his wife should have been, like Cæsar's, exempt from even suspicion—the haughty notion of imperious vanity, which thus looked for what is unattainable in a world of envy and malice.

It was therefore decreed that Guda should be imprisoned for life, and the prison fixed on was the Pfalz.

When the countess was duly made acquainted with this decision, she displayed, to the astonishment alike of those who hated and those who loved her, an almost unbounded joy. Her faithful women, who wept their separation from her, gazed in silent wonder. Count Ludwig vainly strove to solve so strange a mystery; and if Hugo Von Roth possessed, or fancied he possessed, a clew to it, he kept his secret close. Guda was finally committed to the Pfalz in the custody of Von Roth, who, on Ludwig's special recommendation, was named governor of the important place. As the prisoner embarked in the boat that was to convey her from Stahleck, she returned the tearful farewell of her former attendants with smiles; and when she landed on the little margin of rocky earth which surrounded the prison, she threw herself on her knees, and exclaimed, with looks and accents of uncommon fervour,—"Praise be to Heaven, and to holy St. Simon, the patron of the palatinate, for their

special guardianship of the rights of its noble house!"

"A very disinterested thanksgiving in truth;" remarked Count Ludwig, who had accompanied the countess to see her safely lodged in jail,—"very disinterested!—For it implies her own condemnation, as having borne attaint to the honour of my noble brother."

"Oh! continue," added the countess, not hearing this commentary, "continue to watch over the due succession of its princely line, even though I be the sacrifice through which it is accomplished!"

"A generous prayer, by the rood! that I may reap its full benefit!" observed Ludwig, laughing, as the countess rose up and stepped across the narrow drawbridge, at the other side of which she was received by Von Roth's wife. Von Roth himself seemed completely puzzled for the gist of Guda's invocation. But whatever their meaning, he had no doubt of being quickly able to discover it; and he had a lively hope in also finding the means of turning it to his own advantage.

The actual privations of imprisonment produced no more depressing effect on the good spirits of Guda than their anticipations had done. Loss of exercise, of honourable attendance, of rich living, of society, of influence seemed unfelt or disregarded. Some internal source of consolation was evidently supporting her under every trial. But she was not of those reserved beings who long bury their thoughts in their mind's recesses. Unhappiness, indeed, could have been concealed by her, because she had none of the selfishness that calls for relief while bearing the burthens of the heart; but joy seemed naturally to overflow her bosom, as though she felt the want of sharing it with others. The kindliness and cordiality of Frau Von Roth would have pointed her out as the very subject for confidence, in a situation where there was room for selection. In the dreary solitude of the Pfalz there could be no choice; but the countess felt no necessity for such, her heart being completely won from the first day by this her only female fellow-prisoner, (beyond the mere menials,) for all who once entered the lone place, with the

exception of the governor, were doomed to inhabit its narrow precincts for life.

"You wonder, my good dame," said Guda, one evening, as she stood with her prison friend on the little terrace that hung out over the river, and they gazed together at the reflection of the rich landscape in its bosom,—"you wonder at the cheerfulness, the happiness let me more correctly call it, which animates me, under circumstances so apparently adverse?"

"Indeed, madam, it does move my special wonder."

"Is not innocence, good dame, sufficient to bear one up, under all accumulated woes?"

"Alas! no, fair countess; at least not enough to give your air of triumph, although it may be, for the passive endurance of wrong."

"Well, then, kind and friendly matron, know my secret cause of rejoicing—it is that I know myself possessed of the infallible means of giving at once conviction of my innocence, and at the same time rapture on his own account, to my too severe and too much deluded husband,—rapture which I shall share, which I do now antici-

pate in truth, for the very thought of the moment in which I shall become a mother makes me almost wild with joy!"

"A mother!"

"Ay, dame, a delighted mother! The mother, please the holy saints! of an heir to the princely house of the Palatinate, of a bright boy, fit to carry on the honours of his illustrious line, to be at once the justification of his mother and his father's boast and glory! Ah, worthy Frau, dost thou now wonder at my secret enjoyment? Dost thou not rather marvel at the self-restraint with which I have withheld news that would at once have relaxed my husband's rigid severity, and established me in all my right of place and reputation? But I resolved to let Providence work out the destiny of my child; and by willingly holding back my own vindication, prove how I despised all personal suffering, for the joy of surprising my noble lord and princely master with the consummation of his three years' anxious hopes."

During this rapidly uttered speech, Frau Von Roth stood motionless, her hands clasped as they were at the utterance of her own last recorded

exclamation, her eyes fixed on the countess, and gradually filling with tears. At length, when a pause in Guda's rhapsody allowed her to speak, she exclaimed, at the same instant a flood of sympathy bathing her cheeks:—"Oh! wonderful power of artless innocence, how you can delude the mortal bosoms which are at once blest and tortured by your presence! Oh, hapless countess! Oh, unfortunate princess! Oh, miserable mother! that seest not the seal of ruin thus stamped upon thine own fate and that of thy unborn babe! Oh, Countess Guda, recall thy fatal words—say not, believe not, hope not that thou art to give birth to a new victim of misery,—Heaven surely is satisfied with one!"

During the utterance of these words the countess could not comprehend their meaning; and when the speaker concluded this unbidden burst of sympathy, she seemed overwhelmed by the tone, rather than afflicted by the tenor, of the sounds which still rung in her ears.

"Ah, virtuous and innocent countess!" resumed the dame, "you understand me not, neither do you see the extent of your own misery—

for what misery is equal to the sudden ruin of long-cherished hope!"

"My misery! Nay, mock me not, good dame. I am sure, quite sure, that the Virgin Queen of Heaven has listened to my prayers, and that I shall become the mother of a male heir to my princely husband's titles and succession!"

"The fulfilment of your prayer, noble lady, will be the completion of your woe and the destruction of your hopes."

Guda, confounded by the seeming inconsistency of these words, implored the kind-hearted woman to explain them. The latter did so in terms too explicit for misconception. She plainly showed the deluded countess that the promised birth of a child, which a few months before would have been hailed by Count Hermann with delight, and have proved a link of recovered affection and confidence between them, would be now but a certain source of increased hatred, from the palatine's already received impression of her infidelity. The countess long combated this opinion, with a sort of buoyant gaiety, arising from an irresistible feeling of its absurdity, and from that self-deceiving

obstinacy in which consciousness of right is of all feelings that most likely to confirm its possessor. At last the truth of dame Von Roth's reasoning burst suddenly on her like a flash of light. Not from any peculiar brightness in her arguments at any one given stage, but rather from the sudden and self-impelled dispersion of those inward mists of wilfulness in error, which a straight-forward honesty of character more than any other engenders. Such is the common process in all cases of unwilling conviction. Such the true source of obstinacy, an evil consequence arising from an amiable cause. But when the certainty of such long-cherished errors does break on the mind—when the inveterate belief in friendship is proved to be unfounded, or the reliance on affection, which has clung to us like a part of our nature, is wrenched away, how may the shock be depicted? How indeed is it possible that it may be endured, when the props and stays of the heart seem suddenly to forsake it, and it falls prostrate, debased and half-broken at the very feet of what had been so long its support and sustenance? Yet it recovers its elasticity, at least most commonly, for few are totally shattered. A

self-righting principle is almost always found to exist in the virtuous mind; an inward spring which bends but snaps not—and the bosom, lightened of the load of its mistaken confidence, breathes more steadily and freely than if it had never been so overcharged. A fund of solid wisdom has replaced the freight of flimsy sentiment. Vapour has been dispersed by light.

These reflections arise from the analogy rather than the identity between such cases and that of the prisoner of the Pfalz. Countess Guda had not to mourn the treachery of a lover or friend. She had only to endure the anguish of false hopes. It was only herself by whom she had been deceived. Yet the suffering was not less poignant; nor the re-action less sure. She at first nearly sunk under the shock, and she subsequently recovered by the spontaneous outspring of the recompensing instinct. She mourned her ruined reputation, her husband estranged, her station lost; but all seemed worthless, or a thousand fold repaid in the possession of her child, a treasure beyond all price.

But before this best reward for all she had endured and lost, was clasped in living evidence

to her breast, several weary and anxious months were of necessity passed. It would be a painful task to trace the long course of agitation run by the expectant mother's thoughts during this interval. Little stretch of fancy is required to picture the varied conflicts of fear with hope—for bright particles of hope still sparkled through her mind, like fragments of a broken mirror in which she felt it had been once reflected. The main points to be attended to, during these months of expectancy and risk, were perfect secrecy as to the situation of the prisoner, and the securing if possible, the co-operation, if not the sympathy of her gaoler in the various plans imagined between her and his compassionate wife, who had now become her intimate and confidential friend.

Frau Von Roth timidly, but anxiously, undertook this delicate task. She had but little hope of success, from long experience of the harsh and selfish disposition of the man with whom she was mated, but not matched; for never were beings so dissimilar by nature, and never had long habits of life or a common interest, which often bring opinions and feelings to a level, so

totally failed in producing such an effect. The task was however undertaken; and great indeed was the Frau's surprise and joy, when, instead of a coarse repulse, she found her timid hints as to Guda's situation, seized on by her husband with the prompt avidity of a crafty mind, and with evidences of delight, which coldness prevented him from frequently feeling, and cunning still more rarely allowed him to betray. His wife was convinced there was now no pretence in the appearances which so surprised her. Her astonishment was redoubled, when on her proceeding to express her hope that means might be found to convince the palatine that the forthcoming child was really his, Von Roth burst into a fit of incredulous laughter. Losing all patience, she exclaimed, in a tone of bitter reproach:—"Husband, husband! thou art too bad; the king of hell could not doubt the innocence of this ill-treated countess.

"But the Emperor of Germany might, good wife."

"I know not the meaning of thy sinister words and ironical looks—I only hope, Hugo, and I trust in Heaven and St. Simon that a fine

boy may be born in this place, in due form of legal custom, to inherit the rights and honours of the princely race of Stahleck."

"His best chance of that, good wife, is that he may never know his father," was the mysterious reply, which left the worthy woman more bewildered than before.

Hugo Von Roth was a man of few words, but he was as prompt in action as quick of apprehension. Fully comprehending therefore the importance of the intelligence he had just received, he lost not a moment in hastening to communicate it in the quarter where he calculated it would excite most interest.

"Oh, husband, as you value your salvation do not betray this noble lady—do not drag down perdition on your soul by laying her at the mercy of Count Ludwig!" exclaimed Frau Von Roth, with wild energy and in dreadful alarm, as Hugo told her he was obliged to leave the Pfalz for a few days, in the care of his underlings and the military guard.

"It would not require *days* to go to Stahleck, wife, if my course was bent thitherwards," replied he, with his usual smile of mockery.

"Whither go you, then? and why this haste?"

"Should an expectant father be left without the glad tidings of the promised blessing?"

"For the mercy of Heaven, Hugo, do not tell him yet! Wait till the child is born—it may not after all be a boy—but at any rate it would be premature to inform the Count Palatine"——

"The Count Palatine!" reechoed Hugo, with another of his devilish smiles, and the provoking chuckle, his habitual expression of satirical disbelief. He said no more, but soon crossed the drawbridge and left the castle.

In due course of suffering the unfortunate Countess Guda paid her share of those millions of painful instalments, by which woman liquidates the penalty inflicted for the imprudence of our first mother. A child was born to her—and that child a son! At sight of this longed-for blessing, all was forgotten that might have qualified the mother's joy. *That* was without bounds, and Dame Von Roth thought it was without reason. For let the best come of the affair, let even her husband keep the secret, what was to be looked for, thought she, but a

hazardous concealment of the birth for awhile, and a final abandonment of the infant? To keep it long undiscovered in the Pfalz was impossible. Of this latter point the Countess herself was convinced. But she strove to drive away the thought that sooner or later her child must be lost to her. She even at times indulged in the belief that the hard heart of her gaoler would relent before the spectacle of her grief at such a separation, and that he would permit her to elude the vigilance of her guard and escape altogether, to seek shelter in the chances of the wide world, her babe for her protection, her innocence for her passport. But a notion like this had never entered the head of Von Roth.

It was the depth of winter when Countess Guda's son was born. The severity of the season made it impossible for either mother or child to enjoy any of the advantages of the open air, for even the humid and misty vapour of the river was an enjoyment to those confined in the close chambers of a prison. The consequence was that poor Guda and her baby both began to languish. In the mother it was want of her usual exercise; in the child it was the natural

instinct which urges all nature's products out into the breath of heaven, and in its default bids them pine and die. The sensitive parent quickly saw the danger of her boy. She had already discovered that it was impossible to move the stern selfishness of Von Roth so far as to allow of her escape. There was but one alternative—a separation from her child; and she, who a few weeks before had shrunk in agony from the very thought, now urgently implored the cruel man to complete the deed. It seemed next to despair, entrusting her heart's treasure to his keeping. But could she see it pine and expire before her from the pure selfishness of fear? The decision was made—the resolution was promptly fulfilled—Von Roth acted on her own suggestion; and he removed the babe from the half-distracted, half-senseless grasp with which it was clasped to its mother's breast, in spite of all the force of reason, and of affection even, striving to loosen the hold.

The only request urged by Guda—she was in no situation to make conditions—was that her boy might be conveyed to her own native place of Gutenfels, close by, and there brought up in

the family of some one of the faithful serfs, until the day should come when his birth might be avowed and his rights proclaimed; for to that bright day she looked forward with all the enthusiasm of mother's love founded on conscious right. In the hope of Von Roth accomplishing this project, she was at length consoled. She pictured to herself the daily pleasure of looking up to her former happy residence, the rock-based inheritance of her ancestors, of knowing that her infant was close to the shelter of its recollections, for in the fanaticism of feudality she imagined protection and safety in the very name of her fathers and the memory of their power. And soon, thought she, the now helpless infant will grow into boyhood, robust, healthy, vigorous, and I shall see him at morning dawn, in burning noon, or by the dim shades of evening, following the wild career of mountain sports, springing with agile steps from crag to crag, or at times gazing down with instinctive sympathy on this lonely tower, but unconscious that his mother gazes on him the while, through tears which fall in silent tribute on the river's bosom!

The soothing and consolatory train of thought

ran on to wild and wayward lengths; and the morning dawned on a night of mingled wretchedness and comfort, to be comprehended only by those grown children of nature who have lain in misery's cradle, rocked by fancy, and hushed by the false lullaby of hope. As soon as the sun rose upon the hills, and even before the mists rose up in homage from their vine-clad hills, Guda insisted on Frau Von Roth's leading her out on the little platform, that she might look up towards Gutenfels and feast her eyes in the imagined view of her babe. This gentle illusion served to make her suspense less intolerable, until the promised hour for Hugo's return, with tidings that the child was safe and well. The promised hour came, but not the messenger. It passed over, and no tidings were learned of him. Days, weeks, months, years, long and dreary, dragged on their slow course; but Hugo Von Roth, or the boy he carried from the Pfalz on that dark winter night, were unseen within its lonely walls.

One only intimation reached Countess Guda to assuage the grief that at times almost turned to madness. A few mornings after Von Roth's

disappearance, she discovered on the platform, where at earliest dawn she mechanically wandered out to gaze towards the hill, not quite hopeless of intelligence, a scroll of parchment, on which were inscribed the following words; "The mother's treasure is in safe keeping—and when the white and yellow banner waves again on Gutenfels her heart may throb with joy—for then will right be done to her who suffers and to him who is unknown."

These were mysterious and vague words—but they were enough for despair to cling to and change its character. They were the food which nourished Countess Guda for seventeen long years of imprisonment—the light that fed her lamp of life—the spring that kept the frail machine of reason from stopping altogether, or turning into the riot of insanity. White and yellow were the colours of her own old paternal house. Such was the banner that for ages had floated on the towers and battlements; till on her marriage with Count Hermann it was superseded by that of the palatinate, which now waved over Gutenfels in emblazoned pride, adding a new pang of mortification to her whose aching

eyes had no point of comfort to repose on. And daily did she watch for seventeen successive years, in the vain hope of seeing the long-loved colours floating once more in the breeze and shining in the bright ray. Much less time than this would have sufficed to have carried death to a heart predisposed by nature for despair. But Guda's was cast in a different mould. Elastic and buoyant, it floated on the dark waters of worldly woe, and though at times it seemed to be engulfed and lost, it was sure to rise again with each successive wave under which it had appeared to sink. She had a moral energy that would not die. And while that lasts, physical extinction, except from accidental causes, may be looked for in a remote perspective.

During this long period the Countess's great comforter was Frau Von Roth. *She* could not be said to have mourned her widowhood. The loss of such a husband as hers was not a matter of much affliction, for she had no child to form a tie which even the most ill-assorted find it hard to sever. The strict laws of the palatinate made her a prisoner for life; and as she had voluntarily submitted to the conditions (when her

husband was appointed governor) in the sole hope of serving the noble prisoner committed to her peculiar charge, she fulfilled her destiny without a murmur, cheered by the duties of her sacred mission. These amiable women were mutual supports; and the impatient anxieties of the one found unceasing relief from the quiet endurance of the other.

On the disappearance of Von Roth a new governor had been appointed, also a creature of Count Ludwig, who rigidly fulfilled his duty of guarding his prisoners well, but added no unnecessary infliction to the all-sufficient loss of liberty. He had again been replaced, and various others had successively filled the important post. Of all those none had offered an exception to the ordinary rules of life. Some survived, some died; but Von Roth alone had disappeared, leaving no trace to be followed by suspicion. Every one thought, but few ventured to say, that Count Ludwig must be at the bottom of the mystery. The wife of the missing man, conscious of the cause which had existed to make the suspected count smother the secret, even with the death-groans of her husband and

the child he bore away, had at times no doubt that the prevalent opinion was the just one. But then she would start at recollecting the anomalous fact that *her own* life had never been attempted, nor that of the countess. Had Count Ludwig known her husband to be acquainted with the concealed birth, he must also have been aware of her complicity. Would he then have destroyed the one and spared the other? Reason seemed to answer, no, to this question; and then conjecture became only the more bewildered, in proportion to the frequency of its unaccomplished efforts at decision. Countess Guda partook but in a small degree, if at all, of her companion's intense curiosity. She never puzzled herself for a solution of the doubtful question. A happy credulity on the object of her anxiety convinced her that her boy was safe. She never wasted a feeling, nor afforded a thought on the subject of Von Roth's personal fate, or the probability of Count Ludwig's treachery. She breathed an atmosphere of highly rarefied conviction, in which doubt or misgiving could not live.

At length the crisis came which sooner or

later is sure to terminate alike the mental or bodily ills to which humanity is a prey. Count Hermann died in advanced age, and without ever having given token of remorse, or offered reparation for the harsh sentence passed on his wife, on grounds so insufficient and on suspicions so unfounded. He had for years tacitly resigned himself and his dominions into the complete governance of his brother, who thus enjoyed, long before the looked for order of succession, all the sweets of sovereignty except that one, which from its immaterial nature is perhaps that which man's inconsistency values the most. We mean the *name*, the unsubstantial title by which power is designated. When the ambitious Ludwig obtained that, having himself proclaimed Count Palatine with all the solemnity of supposed right and the pomp of confident security, he seemed to have reached the height of his mortal longings; and it was from this height, with nothing of individual philosophy or external sympathy to soften his fall, that he was all at once plunged down.

Scarcely had the ceremony of his installation taken place when proclamations and addresses

were profusely circulated, signed "Hermann of Stahleck, Count Palatine," in which the claimant announced himself as son of the late Count and of his wife Guda, heiress of Cube, duly born in the castle of the Pfalzgrafenstein; prepared with witnesses to attest his rights, and backed by an imperial army to enforce them. Some laughed at these pretensions; others wondered at them; Count Ludwig's heart sank within him.

"Hugo Von Roth has betrayed me!" exclaimed he, on hearing the news. "He lives, and is the chief mover of this affair! The foul fiend seize him, and the young impostor he puts forth! Off, off quickly a chosen band,—I myself will lead it,—to the Pfalz, to seize on the adulterous Guda and her confidant, Ursula Von Roth, and force from them a refutation of these audacious claims!"

When Ludwig and his myrmidons arrived at the Pfalz he found the building unharmed and unoccupied. The fishermen at the river's banks informed him that a few hours before the little garrison was surprised, and the prisoner Countess carried off with the other women, by a well-

armed band of imperialists, headed by a man of a bold aspect, who seemed to know the prison and all its localities well—"Tell me not his name!" vociferated the baffled usurper. "It was the villain, Von Roth himself!"

"That I doubt, your highness," replied the old spokesman of the amphibious band, "for had it been he, his wife would have never gone with him so cordially,—besides it is well known to your highness——"

"Silence, old babbler!—Toss that hoary villain into the waves!" cried the tyrant. His orders were instantly obeyed; and while the drowning man struggled and sank before his eyes, he continued in a transport of rage,—"I know that all the devils in hell are leagued against me in this world!"

"And will lay fast hold of you in the next," murmured one of the listeners, who now all stole away lest some new victim might be seized on to appease the monster's fury. He and his followers quickly flew to arms. Courage was not wanting, as it rarely is, in defence of a bad cause. There is a desperate attraction in the daring of a bold usurper which never fails to draw congenial

spirits towards his standard. If we see in our own days a brother and uncle, base as he is bigoted, find support in his infamy against innocence and right, we need not wonder at his prototype some centuries ago being backed by a servile herd, while priestcraft laboured to uphold his spurious claims. But in vain. The arm of the emperor was stretched forth to protect the just cause which the hand of the false palatine would have crushed. Ludwig made a desperate effort to retain his power; but he and it fell both together, under the double influence of truth and force.

Countess Guda had been informed of the main event of these transactions in the way so mysteriously promised to her so many years before. One day while she and her faithful friend gazed as usual from their prison balcony on the river, and moralized on the unchanging flow eternally and regularly running on, like Time itself, a sudden movement, an instinctive sympathy as Guda thought, caused her eyes to glance upwards towards Gutenfels, at the very moment that the crimson banner of the palatine was struck down by some invisible hand, and that of its ancient

lords, the white and yellow combination so eagerly looked for by their persecuted descendant, elevated proudly in its place.

"Oh, Ursula! my friend, my beloved friend!" cried she, almost frantic with the sudden sight, "Look there, look there! He lives! my dear boy lives, and has reached the promised term of honour and fame at last!—Now let *me* die—I have seen enough!"

"Oh, no! no—till you have clasped your child in your arms, and enjoyed with him long years of happiness and liberty!—Yes, I catch at length the enthusiasm which has so long lighted you on, a beacon to the blissful hour that now approaches.—Yes, beloved lady, you were indeed a prophet, and now, in the completion of your foretelling, I feel the inspiration to which I was so long insensible."

"See, Ursula, see! a black scutcheon is raised on the battlements! I am at once a widow and a mother—My husband, God assoil him! is dead—and my son, as it were, new-born to me!"

The agitation arising from this surprise could not have been long endured by such a tempera-

ment as Guda's, had she been left to its busy workings in the close confinement of her prison. But a liberating hand was near. The fort was surprised as before related, and she and her confidant carried off by friendly force, with the captive garrison, to grace their triumphal route. All they could learn from the commander of the military party which effected their deliverance was, that it was his duty to conduct them direct to the chief seat of the imperial power, a camp not far distant, whence an overwhelming force was about to pour down on the palatinate for the usurper's overthrow.

"And my son?" exclaimed the anxious countess, maternal love uppermost in her mind.

"Patience, madam! Wait awhile and he will be in your arms," replied the officer.

"And the emperor?" cried she, gratitude next rising on the surges of feeling which were heaving within her breast.

"In good time, madam, both son and deliverer will be revealed to you," said a youthful warrior who stood close to the commander, gazing with full eyes upon the countess.

"Let the will of Heaven be done! But it is

harder to wait one day for the consummation of a certain blessing than years after years for the coming of an unaccomplished hope! Lead on, lead on!"

The imperial camp was soon reached; and when the little party arrived, no pomp of martial or princely pride was spared to do them honour. Trumpets flourished, banners waved, and lance and sword were brandished in all the ceremonious forms of salutation which rank could merit or loyalty devise. In the midst of all the glare and brilliancy of the scene, which dazzled more than delighted Guda's long unaccustomed eyes, she only sought one object.

"My son, my son?" asked she once more, in wild searching impatience.

"He is in your arms," answered the senior of her constant guides—and at the instant the fine young man who had with the other so closely attended on her steps, flung himself into the embrace which opened instinctively to receive him.

"And now, oh, now, where is our benefactor—the god-like, the glorious monarch who has wrought this blessing—this miracle?"

"At your feet, madam," replied the former speaker, kneeling before her, with all the submissive gallantry of chivalry's heroes,—"at your feet, too proud in thus paying homage to her whom his indiscretion doomed to years of suffering, but for whom Heaven has reserved the atonement of this hour."

Guda looked bewildered round—she saw that of all the gallant assembly of chiefs and fighting-men, no head was covered save that of the princely-looking man who prostrated himself before her.

"Long live the emperor!" was shouted all around. He, the despotic master of the assembled throng, now rose up, taking off his plumed helm, for the first time since he had completed his vow (which his protegé, the young Count Hermann, shared,) to effect in person the deliverance of the captive countess; she started back, astonished and half alarmed, while a rush of crimson covered her cheeks, her brow and bosom, telling that the life-blood still moved stirringly in the *woman's* as well as in the *mother's* heart.

"Do you then recognize me?" asked the em-

peror, "and can you pardon, after such a tedious term of woe, the imprudent, the too daring cause of all?"

Guda's only answer was an eloquent burst of tears, while she attempted to sink on her knee before her imperial deliverer—her former suitor—the origin and the termination of her sufferings! He caught her gently in his arms, and again spoke:—"Yes, madam, you now behold the daring man who broke on your wedded privacy, poured forth his audacious passion, and hurried on the crisis of that cruel fate, which a harsh husband and a base brother were too prompt and too unpitying not to seize on. It was I, indeed, who entered your bower at Stahleck—it was for my boldness that an innocent knight was hanged, and an angel of virtue, such as you are and were, degraded, imprisoned, and branded with the imputation of the guilt you shuddered at and shrunk from. And oh! how deeply did I pay the penalty of my presumptuous attempt in the remorse which for seventeen years gnawed at my heart! How often was I on the point of rescuing you by force, and proclaiming your innocence to the world! But

the certainty of slander's overpowering force, even when opposed to an emperor's will—the dread of fixing the imputation which I so ardently longed to remove, held me back from day to day, from year to year. I had also ever a high confidence in heaven, that right would be one day justified and innocence avenged. And I felt that to a mind like yours imprisonment, with all its privations, were as nought compared to the glare of worldly calumny which had been certain to assail you, had I openly interfered in your behalf ere the real hour of justification came round. But I did all that man or monarch might safely do. I secured by sure means possession of your son. I knew that in getting him into my own hands I snatched him from the chance, the certainty almost, of destruction—and I have reared him here, in my own court, by my own person, and in my own principles, to become what you see him—and what he will be ere long acknowledged by the world, Hermann Count Palatine!"

The surrounding throng, who had intently listened as the emperor spoke, now caught the echo of his closing words, and loud shouts were

sent up from thousands of voices, of "Long live Hermann of Stahleck! Long live the Count Palatine!"

When Countess Guda in some measure recovered from the confused swell of excitement on which her mind yet seemed tossed, like some vessel on the rolling waves that succeed the tempest's fury, she inquired of her imperial protector "how he had acquired the knowledge of her son's birth? how secured him from the custody of Von Roth?"

"Let Von Roth himself answer those questions," replied the emperor, pointing to a man grown gray and furrowed with time, yet whose cunning expression of countenance proved its identity with the still remembered features and sinister look of her former jailor. He bent on one knee before the countess, while his wife seemed to shrink and half turned aside, as though this apparition was not as pleasant as it was unlooked for; and he briefly explained those points which still required elucidation. He told how he had instantly recognized the emperor, on that memorable evening, in the garden of Stahleck; how he had sworn at the moment of his dis-

covery not to reveal the secret; how he had nevertheless firmly believed in the success of the emperor in his suit with Guda, and attributed to its indulgence all those symptoms of happiness which caused the courtiers to marvel, and confirmed them in their belief of the dishonouring charges made against her, whose virtuous delight at the prospect of becoming a mother was attributed to wanton enjoyments. Von Roth then went on to declare that when his wife confided to him the true situation of the countess, he instantly repaired to convey the news to the emperor, having no doubt that he was the father of the child. To him therefore he finally brought the infant, of whose existence he had never hinted to Count Ludwig, certain that he served a more powerful and more generous master than that fierce tyrant. But if he appreciated the emperor's character, the estimate was reciprocally correct; for the latter resolved to keep his trusty informant in close custody, out of the possibility of betraying the important secret, until the day might come when his testimony would be essential for establishing the truth.

That day was now come; and, with proofs so

undoubted of the birth and identity of the noble youth, his recovery of his rights was a promptly-obtained measure of justice. The usurper Ludwig fought out his quarrel to the last, nor yielded his hold of his unjustly grasped possessions till death in a decisive battle terminated his career. No sooner was the young count installed in all the honours of the palatinate, than the emperor formally proposed himself as a husband to the once beautiful and still most interesting woman, whose early charms had captivated his young and romantic mind. But Guda firmly resisted this dazzling temptation to enter on all the enjoyments and the inquietudes of greatness.

"No," said she, with firm composure, but with a heart overflowing with gratitude, "no, I am not fit to grace the dignity which you so magnanimously offer to share with me. Long unused to the world's ways, and never suited to the intricate paths of elevated state, I must now only request permission to retire for ever from the broad scene of life. Happy, exquisitely happy, in the recovered bliss of my child's existence and in the sight of his glory, I ask no more. No passion with which the name of love

is associated has ever entered my heart, but that maternal affection which was my support under all privations, and is my absorbing sentiment even at a moment, and under the impression of an offer like this. Let me then retire,—and to my own old retreat of the Pfalz, now made dear to me, as the narrow circle where I passed my long noviciate, for plenary indulgence of joy. I only ask that the odious name of prison be removed from what shall henceforward be my river palace; and that the absurd regulation be from this day annulled, that calls for even the temporary inhabiting in dreary solitude, by the wives of the counts palatine, of a place which can to me alone wear a charm, or bring a thought of enjoyment."

It is needless to say that these wishes were fulfilled. Guda and her faithful Ursula retired together to their now free residence: and it was in a long course of time, that their bones were laid side by side in the vaults of the little chapel where they so often and so fervently prayed together.

COUNTESS KUNIGUND.

COUNTESS KUNIGUND.

Countess Kunigund of the Kynast, so was her rock-built castle called, was at twenty years of age one of the wealthiest heiresses and most miserable maidens of the Rhine country. It was not hopeless love that caused her wretchedness, nor that made her devote herself to perpetual seclusion, and vow that she never would change her mourning suit for a bridal dress. Filial piety, wailing over the untimely fate of a beloved parent, had forced the ardent mind of the countess into an unnatural war with those feelings which rise spontaneously in the youthful heart, and bring it consolation for the sufferings caused by accidents, which are independent of its own movement. That which reduced Countess Kunigund to her present misery was a frightful one, and enough to produce some violent burst of sentiment, though it could not excuse the ob-

stinate perseverance, which produced in the sequel consequences more terrible than itself. It is less therefore as an object of pity than as an example of pride that we are about to hold her up.

Wandering one evening on the edge of the tremendous precipice on which the castle was built, with her father, an old and infirm man to whom she was dotingly attached, some momentary forgetfulness of his insecurity caused her to leave him for awhile unsupported.—He tottered on the outmost verge—fell over—and was dashed to pieces at the bottom of the gloomy glen from which the rocky battlement uprose. The first shock and succeeding agony of the daughter were horrible. A thousand frantic reproaches broke from her,—she called herself murderess, parricide, monster,—and she swore in the crisis of her despair that a life of penance, mourning, and celibacy, should be the expiation of what her over excited feelings forced her to consider a crime. She, in consequence of this rash vow, shut herself up in her castle, excluding all visitors from its late hospitable halls; and it soon acquired a reputation for gloom as great as

that it formerly enjoyed for festivity and pleasure. The maiden mourner of the Kynast became the subject of compassionate curiosity through the land; and the romantic feelings of the age were all up and overflowing regarding her.

Many knights formed chivalric designs, and made vows in accordance with them, all bearing on the interesting heiress, her desolate state, and her rich inheritance. Enthusiasm, like all ardent passions, is propagated by example. A moral epidemic affects masses of mind as atmospheric causes act on matter. Groups of men become simultaneously brave or generous, cowardly or sordid, without being able to distinguish the commencement of the symptoms, which seem common to all, but which nevertheless are first developed in some single individual, and then fly electrically through the rest. It was thus that the solemn vow of the young Ritter Flamenberg to obtain the hand of Kunigund or perish in the attempt, inspired many others with similar sentiments to those which actuated him; and a wide-spread display of championship in the cause of the orphaned, and, as it was quickly

discovered, the injured countess. For it happened, that in proportion as this wild sympathy was excited towards her in those from whom she was remote and unknown, a base design was conceived by two of her nearest neighbours, one of them her close kinsman, to take advantage of her desolate and unprotected state, to despoil her of her possessions, and add ruin to wretchedness.

These disgraces to chivalry soon began to act on their design, by violating her territory, harassing her serfs, and preparing more decisive outrages against her castle and her very person. In this emergency, the vassals, who had been so long happy and prosperous in the protection of the old lord, the influence of whose good character was equivalent to bodily vigour or strength of mind, now loudly and openly proclaimed their discontent. In every feasible way they assailed their sovereign lady with remonstrance and petition; but it was long in vain that they endeavoured to obtain an audience, or to arouse her from her apathy to listen to their wise suggestions. The few attendants allowed to approach her secret place of mourning urged the

general complaints, and implored her to grant the prayers of her dependent people, who begged her with one voice to choose a mate and a protector, for her own sake as well as theirs. Irritated and harassed by this clamour, her proud mind was vexed rather than soothed by such proofs of her own importance; and, nothing moved from her resolution, she at length, in an impulse of haughty grief, consented to admit the vassals to her presence, together with the knights who, avowing themselves her champions, had come to offer their services to her.

The preparation for this audience was made with much solemnity, and its announcement caused general rejoicing among the many whose various objects were interested in its results. The serfs looked to the accession of some brave and stalwart young knight to the rights and privileges of their ancient lords, able to repress the inroads of the bold marauders, to lay their grievances at the foot of the imperial throne, and perhaps to turn the tables of wrong upon the powerful chiefs who now daily visited them with all the evils of civil spoliation. The several young knights who were the objects of

these anticipations, and who avowed themselves aspirants for the manifold honours they implied, were anxiously busied with the hopes of success, a few perhaps with the fears of failure, but all with proud and high resolve to prove themselves worthy of the prize they were about to contend for, either in amicable emulation or bloody rivalry as circumstances might decide.

When the doors of the great hall were thrown open for the admission of these anxious expectants, all were startled at perceiving the gloomy solemnity of the scene. The windows were all closed so as that the light of day was quite excluded, but sombre and partial beams from crystal lamps, covered with gauze, fell upon the walls, floor, and ceiling, which were all closely covered with black velvet. On an elevated seat at the upper end of this gloomy apartment, Countess Kunigund was placed, her pale and somewhat stern, though handsome, features, contrasting with her mourning dress, and her air of cold indifference ill suiting with the ardour of the throng which pressed forward to pay their homage. "And what would ye now, faithful but importunate vassals?" said she in tones of so-

lemn reproach—"what would ye from a lone and desolate maiden, unfit for worldly cares or bland solicitings? Why may I not be permitted to fulfil my sad destiny in peace, and accomplish my irrevocable vows, unmolested and unknown, in the silence of sorrow and the secresy of remorse?"

"Gracious lady," replied an old man, who was deputed by his fellow vassals to be their spokesman, "noble Countess, there are many reasons to justify our intrusion on this scene of painful and too long enduring penance. Grief for the dead weighs not against duty to the living, nor should forced and hasty vows nullify the sacred obligations between liege lady and vassal. You owe us protection—and we are ruined for want of it. You owe to your own dignity and your own interest a strong effort to repel the false neighbours who ravage your possessions and trample on your rights. Every thing calls on you to rouse from this lethargy of overwhelming woe, to vindicate your outraged honour, and redress your people's wrongs."

"What would ye have me do?" asked Kunigund, not displeased at the tone of bold but affecting sincerity of the old man.

"We would humbly urge you, fair and noble maiden," resumed he, "to choose from among the gallant knights who throng this hall, with us your faithful vassals, one able to defend us and avenge you, against false Hans of Valshsteden and the perjured Ritter Stalkeisen."

Countess Kunigund at these words threw a long and curious glance on the ten or a dozen young scions of chivalry, who all stood forward, bent their knees, and confirmed the words of the old man, by offering themselves with one voice for her acceptance. No beam of joy played across her features or broke from her eyes, such as lights the face of beauty when it catches the electric flash, from looks that speak to a maiden's heart in tones which it acknowledges. Some of those youths she had known before; others were now seen for the first time. They were among the flowers of German nobility, but not one of them seemed formed for her. The one mysterious and indescribable token of sympathy which joins heart to heart existed not between Kunigund and any living man.

"Well then!" exclaimed she, at length, with a painful effort and an air of chilling haughtiness, which it required all the fervour and ex-

travagance of chivalric devotion to resist—"well then, since claims like these are forced upon me, since the interest of others is at stake, and my inclination and my happiness are set at nought—listen to me! Vassals mine, and ye noble knights who would do me honour in my own despite, I consent"——

Loud shouts from the impetuous serfs broke the sentence of the countess, and gave expression to their delight. But when she waved her hand for silence, and on obtaining a pause again addressed them, their animation was somewhat damped by her rigid look and unbending tone.

"I consent—but only on one condition; and as I am ready to yield up my liberty and sacrifice my happiness for your good, my vassals, it is fair, is it not? that I should do so only on my own terms."

Words of reluctant assent were murmured from the throng, in answer to a proposition which could scarcely be disputed, but which nevertheless seemed coupled with some reservation that threatened disappointment to their hopes.

"And with what condition, may it please your gracious countess," said the old leader of

the vassals, "does it seem meet to your highness to clog, what we hoped was the free consent of youth and nature, springing forth to meet the wishes and relieve the wants of your faithful and suffering people?"

"Ye shall hear!" answered the countess, while a look of fearful resolve and fixed indignation made the timid thrill with awe, and prepared the whole assembly for some desperate announcement or some act of despair. Yet there were some bold and ardent spirits among the knights, who felt a still stronger and wilder attraction towards the being they had wrought themselves into love of, though every successive word and look of hers was revolting to the true sympathy that is awakened by female heroism when it is allied with womanly grace.

"Ye shall hear!" repeated Kunigund, rising from her seat; but her eyes were so fixed, her complexion so pallid, her features and expression so rigid, that she looked less like a living being than some sculptured type of mourning, moved by mechanism from a cenotaph. She walked with stately strides towards the door of the apartment, followed by her domestic attendants and

the few maidens who waited on her person; while the knights aspirant bowed low as she passed, and the serfs fell back all with a profound obeisance, and some not without a thrill which was less of reverence than of terror.

To the surprize of all the beholders, for not even her chosen confidents were able to solve the problem of her movements, she walked forth out of the hall, through the corridors and vaulted passages, to the great portal, thence across the court-yard, out from the ramparts, over the drawbridge, and stopped not till she reached the verge of that naturally battlemented precipice which was the utmost external bulwark of the place, and from which her father had fallen. Oftentimes during this progress the most hardy of the spectators shuddered from a dread they did not venture to speak, and all seemed to follow the main actress in the scene, as though destiny hurried her on, and withheld them from preventing a terrible catastrophe. But when she reached the term of this strange promenade, she stopped short, paused, looked down steadily for a few minutes on the fearful chasm below, then turned round towards the awe-stricken

throng, and spoke, "Now shall ye hear my conditions of consent," said she; "ye, cruel vassals, who force me to forego my only consolation for the past—my solitude and my devotion; ye, enterprizing youths, whose championship for her who needs not and wishes not its display, may perhaps be based on some less purely chivalric principle than abstract love of one who loves ye not—no matter! ye shall have your selfish wishes gratified, if one be but as brave as ye are all importunate. See here!—here from this narrow ledge of wall, this loose and broken edge of rock did my venerable father fall before my eyes, which closed not in insensibility till they saw him rebound and dash from crag to crag a mangled corpse. His body lies unburied still in the deep mysteries of that chasm which no mortal yet has fathomed. Well! ye all see that I bear to look down on that frightful depth without my brain being turned—my mind maddened! Can he who aspires to my hand be said to merit it unless he can do as much? But none among those gay knights have let an aged parent slip from their hold—none of those have the memory of that foul crime to curdle their blood

and dizzy their eyes as they look down. What then must they do to place themselves at least on a level with me in point of danger, and prove they have nerves as strong and heads as clear as the weak woman they seek to mate with? They must do *this!* They must each and all, who seek for the lordship of the Kynash and the hand of the wretched Kunigund, mount their good steeds in full caparison, and each armed *cap-à-pie*,—and then, with unflinching heart and steady hand, ride the whole length of this narrow ledge, where scarcely footing is seen for the closest stepping courser, and where many a crumbling fragment makes even that footing insecure. He who can do this with unblanched cheek and unshaken hand, he alone may call himself my equal, and such only will I accompany to the altar, as a vanquished—but not even then a willing bride! If any choose to obtain me by an ordeal like this, let him declare his intentions, and fulfil it—till then I am a vestal—the lone priestess of despair!"

She moved again into the castle—but this time alone. No one followed her. No one spoke. Her words seemed to have struck all the

listeners motionless and dumb. A creeping horror, at the dreadful terms of the conditions, and at the fierce decision with which her speech was uttered, ran through the crowd. "This can be no woman—'tis a fiend in female form!" was the muttered thought of the great majority of those she addressed. All notion of love towards Countess Kunigund—all wish of obtaining her died away at once in several of the breasts which glowed so intensely but a few minutes before. It was not however so with all. There were four exceptions. He who first recovered from his wonder, and with still more inflamed desire burned for the possession of the marvellous being he almost deified, was the bold Ritter Flamenberg. Scarcely had this impetuous young knight, the first in vowing himself to her cause, the most enthusiastic in sacrificing himself to her harshness, lost sight of her as she re-entered the castle, then he seized his horse's bridle from the hand of an attendant groom, and vaulting into the saddle, spurred on towards the battlement. The astonished crowd did not attempt to stop him till he got close to the very edge, and till his horse in obedience to his efforts

actually raised his forefeet to place them on the perilous path. Then several of the bystanders ran towards him and loudly remonstrated against his making an attempt which must be followed, they thought, by certain destruction. But the knight would not be restrained.

"No," said he in a loud voice, "no! nothing shall keep me back—my passion for the divine Kunigund will overcome all obstacles—have no fears my friends, I shall ride the course in safety! But were it possible that devotion like mine should fail, and that I might be dashed down this frightful steep, are not a thousand deaths well earned, in the honour of dying for her? On, my good steed! on! To glorious death or blissful triumph!"

The words were scarcely uttered, and the first steps of the courser taken on the narrow and broken edge, when his footing gave way, and man and horse in an instant fell! They were dashed to atoms on the rocks below. A cry of terror burst from the throng. It reached the recesses of Countess Kunigund's retreat. She started at the shock. She watched impatiently the returning of the attendant who rushed out to

ascertain the cause. He soon came back, pale and agitated.

"Well?" asked the countess.

"Gracious lady, Ritter Flamenberg, attempting the ride, has been dashed to the bottom of the glen."

Kunigund started—with horror let it be hoped—but the first expression visible to the shocked attendants on her heretofore marbly countenance, was a smile and a look of satisfied pride.

The homely proverb says that "one fool makes many." The prompt and wide-spreading contagion of human weakness, developed how it may be, is certainly a humiliating fact. The days of chivalry present perhaps the most abounding instances of fanatic phrensy, from the wholesale display offered by the crusades down to the individual examples of Countess Kunigund's lovers. No sooner was Ritter Flamenberg and his steed decidedly ascertained to have been destroyed, than Walter of Zinstauf, who had also entered the lists of perilous courtship for the fair hand and cold heart of Countess Kunigund, mounted his war horse and pressed on towards the fatal battlement, confronting almost

certain death, sooner than let hesitation to risk the desperate ordeal be attributed to fear. No opposition was offered. The spectators were stupefied by the recent horrid spectacle, and they stood in mute apathy awaiting the next. Von Zinstauf rode on, but spoke not a word. Just as his horse, after some reluctance, rose on the narrow ledge and began his forward march, the knight waved back his hand towards the castle towers, as if in reproachful farewell to the cruel mistress for whom he felt that he was immolating himself. Scarcely ten yards from the starting place the war steed stumbled, tripped, and fell forward—recovering itself quickly in the instinct of danger it rose up, reared high, and becoming unmanageable to all the efforts of the intrepid rider it finally fell over, first throwing him from his seat. His presence of mind saved him, for he flung himself at the right side of the parapet. He fell heavily on the pavement of the broad platform, but the horse went down to certain destruction. The anxious crowd rushed towards the prostrate knight, whom they found with a fractured limb and a bruised body, to mourn his failure and rejoice over his escape.

Murmurs rose among the crowd. They swore this suicidal butchery should not go on. Curses were even heard to mingle with their indignant expressions against her who had invented so frightful a method of torture and death. "Better," cried the boldest of the serfs, "better the spoliation and the outrage of Valahsteden and Stalkeisen than service to a woman like this!"

These words and the result of Walter of Zinstauf's attempt were duly and quickly imparted to Kunigund. She felt or affected great concern at this mad perseverance on the part of those who sought her hand. Urged then by a faithful follower to retract the terrible condition and choose a husband from among the suitors, she resolutely refused; but she gave strict orders to prevent by force the renewed attempt of any one to ride the fatal battlement, at least for that day.

We must not attempt to paint her feelings and reflections during the night. Yet the mingled triumphs of her vanity over the two rash men, one maimed, another killed in so worthless a cause, must have found a deadly contrast in the

pangs of her remorse for the wanton sacrifice of life and limb to her criminal exertion of influence over the heated minds of men. But during this night many of even the most heated of those had cooled. The fatal results of the two attempts already made, changed several staunch supporters of the orphan into deadly enemies of the tyrant; and the hatred of cruelty neutralised all their pity for misfortune. Two knights only were found on the morrow to persevere in the resolution of the preceding day. They were brothers; by name Ferdinand and Rupert von Ladenburg, remarkable for personal beauty, high spirit, and mutual affection. They declared their resolution to attempt the terrific trial of skill—or rather to brave the risk of destruction, for expertness of hand or steadiness of head had little influence in the task. When morning broke they presented themselves at the castle gates anew, and demanded due witnesses to the exploit, if indeed the countess would not relent and choose an unexceptionable husband, rather than persist in dooming to almost certain death one or both. The names of the new candidates

for almost inevitable martyrdom were duly announced to her. Her eyes sparkled with joy, which however she strove to repress.

"*Two* of the Ladenburgs!" said she,—"but there is a third, Albert, the eldest, and they say, for I have heard of these brothers, the handsomest, the bravest, the most accomplished of any—Is he not of the suitors now?"

"Madam, Ritter Albert of Ladenburg was married yesternight, in the church of Roerbach, to Anna Von Issenvelt, whose love he had wooed and won."

"And these, his adventurous brothers, would now enter the lists to add me and my domains as fair branches to their paternal tree? Never! never shall Kunigund of Kynast be the reward of mercenary man—at least unless he can work a miracle in his form, and he pass the ordeal I have named. Let those young knights think well on it, but if they *will* persist, why 'tis their own doing and not mine."

"Gracious lady," said the old chamberlain, to whom these words were addressed, "might it be not better still to *command* instead of warn-

ing those rash but noble youths? To prohibit altogether their mad attempts:—to retract your conditions?"

"And choose a mate for this lone and desolate heart?" said Kunigund, interrupting the timid counsellor. "That I will never do. Let these young men ponder well, tell them from me that I am grateful for the homage they avow, but pray them not to run this risk. One madman has already perished—another victim is sorely hurt—'tis too much for my peace of mind, enough for the honour of chivalry. Say all this, good chamberlain, but say it gently, do not wound the boiling honour of knighthood, which brooks no slur on its courage, no hindrance to its high resolves."

The chamberlain who went out on this equivocal embassy, and the other attendants who heard the words, were convinced that obedience to the imperfect dissuasion was far from the countess's wishes. The vain-glorious pride of her nature was raised to the utmost, and she made light of the lives of men, self-sacrificed at so dishonourable a shrine.

Ferdinand, the elder of the brothers, first

tried the desperate race; for they both rejected the persuasion of the chamberlain, and persisted in their resolution, believing that had the countess relented, or was she displeased with their design, she would have taken more effectual means to have prevented it. The gallant youth met no better fate than Ritter Flamenberg—he and his horse fell from the appalling height to the very bottom of the precipice, and never breathed from the moment he touched the bottom.

Half maddened by his brother's fate, yet urged on by the greater phrensy of his own insane passion, or what he fancied to be such, Rupert prepared to brave the trial and attempt the task, which was now looked on as utterly impossible to be accomplished. The various members of the household and the scattered groups of serfs attracted by the rashness of these new adventurers, now began to grow callous to trials which at the first exhibition of the preceding day had so shocked them; while even those who did not share the danger or aspire to the reward, became by degrees inspired with the same kind of feelings as those which so wildly burned in the breast of the young knight.

He mounted his horse—he bade farewell to his squire and the other witnesses—he privately crossed himself—cast one look of horror and grief below on his brother's mangled corpse—another up to heaven—and with a speed that was frightful to the beholders, but which he believed to be his best chance for accomplishing the feat, he galloped his courser along the parapet wall. More than half of the distance was passed, the horse's feet, as if by miracle, dashed securely through the rugged impediments, the deed seemed done—when all at once down stumbled the frightened animal, in a moment more it disappeared, the knight was unseated, but to the joy of the breathless beholders he caught the parapet with both hands, and while he struggled to reach the top, several rushed forward to seize him and lift him from the horrid situation in which he hung. They were too late—the crumbling stone he grasped gave way and he fell. The shocked spectators looked shuddering down, and saw the lifeless body stretched not far from that of the brother who had led the way.

These repeated tragedies were too much for endurance. Public opinion was no more re-

strained. A universal indignation broke out; and Countess Kunigund was forced to proclaim publicly a prohibition against any new attempt, to which she added a declaration of her resolution, happen what might, never to quit her now-loathed and guilt-stained castle for another home. For it was said that at length her callous feelings had been touched, and that the deaths of so many martyrs had, after the burst of her unfeminine pride subsided, haunted her, as well they might, like so many murders committed by her own hand. Wild stories went abroad of her secret sufferings, of noises heard, of sights seen; the castle was, one by one, abandoned by all who could find a refuge elsewhere, the domains were ravaged by lawless plunderers, the serfs ruined; and she, the obstinate and mysterious author of the general misery, left alone and unpitied in the desolation she had created. Few friends sought—no lover assailed her—pity and affection passed by without deigning to seek her dreary abode. Six months thus passed away. The grass was growing high in the once populous court-yards, the gates creaked gloomily on their rusty hinges, seldom set in motion for the

admission of visitor or guest, and the few domestics who remained, in close attendance on their shunned and solitary mistress, rarely left the internal parts of the castle, or ventured out, into the light of inquiry, which strove to penetrate its secrets.

One night—it was in winter—when the rain was pattering on the roofs, and beating against the casements, a high wind whistling through the angular intricacies of tower and bastion, and every dreary accessory giving additional gloom to the sombre aspect of the Kynast, the warder was roused by the unusual sound of the bugle at the gate. On answering the summons to lower the drawbridge and give free admittance to the castle, he descended; and perceived a cavalier armed at all points, mounted on a tall, yet light-built courser, which like the armour, mantle, and plume of the rider, was jet black. The warder regularly summoned the stranger to announce his name, quality, and business.

"Good warder," replied he, throwing open his cloak and exposing the red cross on his breast, "my name must rest in my own keeping

to-night. My business is love—I come as a suitor to the fair lady of the Kynast."

"Welcome, welcome, Sir Knight! much does it glad my eyes to see at length a suitor of your martial mien and prowess at our gates—for no doubt that red cross was borne in bloody field 'gainst Paynim foes, and that its wearer is a warrior of fame! Come in, Sir Knight! you bear your passport, and your right to secresy, in that revered and honoured badge."

With these words the overjoyed warder lowered the drawbridge, raised the portcullis, and admitted the stranger knight. But as the red light of the torch gleamed upwards on the stranger's face, the warder felt a sudden thrill of awe; for in the stern beauty of the countenance he thought he recognised that of one of the unfortunate young knights who had last fallen victims to Countess Kunigund's harsh ordeal—but which of them his feeble memory, rendered still weaker by alarm and superstition, could not decide. "Jesu Maria guard me!" exclaimed he, as the horseman moved slowly onward towards the court-yard; "that may scarcely be a

living man—for methinks the body and bones of the spirit that rides away so stately there, lies mouldering and blanched at the bottom of the devil's glen!" for so was the dismal place familiarly, and not unaptly, named.

A solitary varlet now came out to lead the knight to the body of the building, and one groom appeared to take charge of his beautiful Arabian steed. "What!" said the knight, in a tone of surprise and displeasure, but the servants could scarcely distinguish whether it was real or in mockery; "what! is this the scurvy attendance prepared by the lady of the Kynast for her guests? It was not so—if report speak truly—that she was wont to receive her suitors. Is the proud spirit of Countess Kunigund grown so humble?" And with the concluding words the varlets thought they observed an expression of bitter anger on the strange knight's dark and determined countenance. Altogether his air and manner made them shudder with fear; and the whispered suspicions of the warder found a ready reception in their belief that they were doing service on no mortal being, but on the spectral effigy of one of the immolated aspirants

who had last made the fatal effort for the performance of the impracticable feat. No doubt was entertained among the terrified menials of its being the ghost of one of the brothers of Ladenburg—*which* of them they could not determine, they had both been so much alike, and their fatal appearance was of such short duration.

Great had been the delight of these few remaining servitors at the rare appearance of what they at first believed to be a solid suitor for their mistress's hand, and infinite their readiness to give him attendance and do him honour; but nothing in comparison with their terror on discovering it to be a ghost, and with their alacrity to obey its orders and anticipate its wishes. In those days of easy faith, flesh and blood was held in much less respect than spirit. Prompt then as thought itself was the speed with which the mysterious visitant was ushered into the grand reception hall, and an announcement of the new arrival made to Countess Kunigund. She, forlorn, desolate, harassed with importunities from without, and haunted by remorse from within, had long felt disposed to receive graciously any new comer who might present

himself. The pride of her heart had been humbled, her obstinacy bent, if not quite broken; and she had daily and nightly longed for the announcement which now broke so unexpectedly on her. The frightened domestics did not dare to tell her it was a ghost who claimed the honour of an immediate interview with her; but they respectfully urged her instant presence in the great hall, to judge with her own eyes of the right of her impatient visitor to have his claims admitted, and hear from his own lips (they shuddered while they gave his message) the terms on which his suit was to be pleaded.

Countess Kunigund was superior to the fears of her followers, and for the reasons just told, she was still more anxious than they to give a prompt audience and a favourable ear to the expectant stranger. Night, too, was now her natural hour of action. She had grown used to darkness. Day-light was a pain and a reproach. She was therefore as ready as she was willing to descend from her secret sanctuary to the great hall of reception, where the stranger awaited a reply to his solicitation for an immediate audience.

When Kunigund entered he was standing in

a deep reverie, and when his eye caught her dark-robed form and pallid face he started, but stirred not, as though the thrill that shook his frame had rooted it more firmly to its place. When *her* looks rested on his manly figure and fine countenance, she too felt a throb of no common kind. It was not superstitious dread, for her casual view of the knights who paid their homage on the memorable day of audience had left no impressions of their likeness on her mind. She did not therefore share her domestics' belief that one of the victims' shades had now returned on earth, in mortal guise, to do her harm and revenge his own sacrifice. Her emotions arose from combined and incongruous feelings, all tending however to one point. The noble mien, the manly beauty, the dignified severity of his piercing glance, at once subdued the soul of the now sensitive countess. She was his captive ere he spoke; but when he did give utterance to the honied words of flattery, when his brow unbent and his eyes lighted up, and his cheek grew flushed, and eloquence urged his soft-toned voice into strains of passionate love, the conquest was complete.

Morning dawned ere Countess Kunigund separated from her fascinating guest. We may not tell what various devices on his part so charmed away the night—how many moving tales he told of battles fought in Holy Land, of maidens rescued from danger, of tyrants punished for crime—nor the soothing flatteries which stole from his beguiling tongue, tipped with the bland hypocrisy of seeming passion. Three days and nights he played his game of conquest, and won it well. Never was maiden more enamoured—never was proud beauty so enchained. This may seem rapid work to the cold casuists who argue on the theory of love, and *calculate* what mocks all measure and spurns all rules. It may seem indecorous to the prudish reasoners who settle down the time in which the heart may be lost and won. But love in the warm days—and nights—of chivalry was not what it is now—though even now, thank Heaven! there are youths and maids whose bosoms bound at the *first* looks and tones, which instinct tells them are the true ones. But Countess Kunigund was out of the pale of all common-place causes and effects. Prepared for the prompt re-

ception of the passion which, like him who inspired it, knocked at her heart's gates for entrance in the cold-dark night of misery, she gave herself up at once to the longed-for delight—to the frightful *delusion*.

And be it remembered that the domestics, male and female, one and all, (and none other saw the stranger-knight,) were agreed that it was an embodied fiend in human shape that, with such fierce fondness, pressed his suit and gained the affections of their hapless lady.

On the third night of this short but ardent courtship, Countess Kunigund consented to become the bride of the stranger, having so far taken his honour and his truth on trust as to agree to the concealment of his name and quality until the moment of the celebration of the nuptials. She had given herself thus away with her whole soul. There was no reserve in the abandonment with which she threw her heart into the flood of passion by which it was carried along. Her delight was unconcealed as it was boundless. She seemed to have only then discovered her real character; and, instead of haughty harshness, her every word and look

seemed inspired by the pure essence of feminine softness.

The next morning after the formal consent was given, the loud ringing of bells, hoisting of flags, and other symbols of rejoicing announced the approaching celebration of the so-long wished for event. The serfs came pouring in, having been for a day or two previous prepared for the good news. The Kynast and its vassal dependants were once more the centre of joy and hope. Gloom and sadness seemed, by some magic power, banished from the place again, and all looked brighter than ever—for no light shines so brilliantly as the unreal gleams of hope.

The domestics, believing their mistress to be hurried on by a fatal destiny, partook not in the general joy—but they kept their secret opinion close, and none of the crowding vassals, who now filled the courts and halls, doubted but that the promised husband of their lady liege was a substantial being of living flesh and blood.

The hour of noon arrived, and the bridal party came forth from their attiring rooms in all the pride and brilliancy of ornament and elation. The countess outshone all the attendant maidens,

who, summoned from the neighbourhood round, had hurried to grace the pageant, forgetting all previous qualms on the score of Kunigund's unpopular perversity, in the delights of a wedding, a rare, and in the present instance an unhoped-for, occurrence. The chosen partner into whose arms she was so readily prepared to throw herself, came forth from his chamber to join the gay-dressed groups, among which his mistress shone so splendidly in robes of virgin-white begemmed with costly ornaments, and starting into glorious beauty from her many months of mourning and despair, like the morning sun bursting from the gloom and heaviness of night. Many a longing eye was turned on the door through which the stranger bridegroom was to enter; many a conjecture hazarded as to the appearance he would make. It was known that he travelled in no state, and that his undignified saddle-bag could hold no glittering store of attire. But none doubted that his good taste and gallant feeling had provided one suit of gay apparel, befitting the happy issue of his courtship, besides that plain black suit in which alone he had as yet appeared. The door at length opened, and

he entered the thronged hall. A gloomy thunder cloud, descending in a bright summer's day upon some sun-lit vale, could not strike more dismay into the frightened flocks and herds, than did the stranger's presence, as he now stalked in, habited in his complete harness of black armour, with helm on head crowned with funeral plumes, no smile of nuptial happiness lighting his pale face, nor any movement of enamoured ardour animating his slow and solemn step.

But if the general effect of this painful surprise was disappointment and alarm, what was the prophetic agony that struck cold to the heart of Countess Kunigund? Who may tell, or even fancy, the pang that pierced through her triumphant exultation!

The dead silence which reigned through the almost stupefied assembly was broken by the stranger. "Fair countess, and ladies all who come to grace this spectacle," said he, in a tone of gallantry which rather reassured those he addressed, "ye deem, no doubt, that this is a suit unfit for a nuptial morning, savouring more of war than love. Be not alarmed! Full many a va-

lorous knight has wedded the lady of his heart in harness—but I have yet a task to fulfil, a deed to do, ere I may doff my mailed coat and deck myself in bridal bravery."

"What task, what deed?" murmured Countess Kunigund, a fearful misgiving stealing on her mind. "Thou hast nought to accomplish now but to complete the ceremony which will make me thine, in form as I am in feeling, in legal right as in the heart's allegiance."

"What then, countess, do you forget the feat, without the performance of which you vowed so solemnly no living man should gain your hand?—In attempting which, so many noble knights have been already lost?"

The look and emphasis with which these words were uttered struck terror into all who heard them, but to none so much as Countess Kunigund. It seemed to her as though the embodied ghosts of her victims all frowned on her together from the dark commanding brow, and flashed angry lightning from the full eyes which were fixed on her with piercing lustre.

"My horse to the gate, oh!" exclaimed the stranger, in an imperious tone, turning round to

the assembled men, and apparently careless as to the various qualities of those he addressed. The trembling domestics rushed out in a body to obey the order which none dared to dispute, and the stranger prepared to move away when Kunigund, losing even the memory of her former pride, sunk into the very abasement of love, and forgetting alike self-respect and self-will in the overflow of fear for the safety of him who had so vanquished and enthralled her, sprang forward from the place of honour where she had sat, caught the stranger in her arms, and sobbing aloud, implored him (like to an appealing criminal) to forego the risk he threatened, and join her in the instant performance of the rites which would make them one.

The smile which played on the stranger's lips at this display of humiliating affection, seemed to the beholders far more terrible than the frown which had preceded it. It fell on Kunigund's heart like the mockery of brightness or of joy—like a moonbeam on a glacier. She felt petrified with a sense of cold horror which she could not dare to define. One only conviction of its nature was evident in every new pang she en-

and in as many more the horse was on the platform's narrow edge. The throng who had irresistibly followed stood gazing with fixed looks on the adventurous man—if man indeed they considered him, who now so wantonly braved a fate which the others were forced to. But however some of those less initiated in the former horrors of the place might look on the present as a mere mortal adventurer, well were the domestics convinced, as they now marked him, that it was indeed nothing more than the wicked freak of some vindictive ghost, for they would one and all have sworn that the figure they saw before them was one of the young men who, six months previously, had rode along and fallen from the same fatal spot.

The mysterious cavalier commenced his course; and all but the countess marked the air of dignified confidence with which he rode, and the as perfect steadiness of the steed, who stepped over every impediment, with an unfaltering tread, as though human knowledge rather than brute instinct had been its guide. These were points for curiosity or common place anxiety to admire. But the intense agitation of Kunigund saw all

through a different medium. Her eyes, riveted on the form of him she loved, could descry nothing but the frightful danger of his position, unmixed with the least symptom of safety for him or for herself. More dead than alive, she waited the result of his undertaking; and she almost longed for the insensibility, even were it to be of the tomb, that would shut out the agonizing scene, which she could not however avoid staring on as long as it lasted. The suffering of the few minutes employed in the performance of the feat—for it *was* performed—was worse than an age of common pain. The legend does not tell whether Kunigund's hair turned grey during the trial; but it is certain that the very sources of life's fountain were fast drying up, and that only one finishing stroke was wanting to break the heart which was thus already parched and withered.

The feat was done. The rider had accomplished his task. Those of the spectators who believed him a mortal man, looked at him in wondering admiration. Those who thought they could see but the impalpable form of a fiend, gazed in terrified amaze. But shouts of con-

gratulation burst from the crowd, and awoke Countess Kunigund from the trance of over-excitement which had assumed a shape so like the listless air of apathy. A new revulsion of feeling shook the principle of life within her to its very foundation, to its most intricate mysteries. She bounded forward with extravagant delight to catch in her arms him who seemed to have conquered her and destiny together. She rushed towards him as he rode proudly forward, his own calm and stern deportment not more contrasted with her wild abandonment of mien than it was with the foaming agitation of the war-horse, which seemed to feel (whether from instinct or reason, let metaphysicians decide) the whole force of the terrific triumph it had accomplished. When the knight met the rapid advance of Kunigund, and as her outstretched arms were ready to clasp him, in the very moment of the bounding descent from his steed for which she awaited in throbbing anxiety, he drew himself up in his seat, and with the look and tone of an avenging angel, at once beautiful and brilliant, to fulfil his awful mission, he exclaimed—"Countess Kunigund, I have performed the frightful feat

dictated to your former suitors by your pride, persevered in to their destruction by your cruelty, and at length abandoned from selfishness and base passion—not in my favour, but your own. Forgetting woman's first charm, modesty, as you had before abandoned her fairest attribute, mercy, you have laid yourself at my feet, a stranger, and for aught you know an adventurer. You have disgraced yourself without honouring me. You offer yourself to me—I reject you! I have proved my right to you and your possessions—I renounce the latter since they should come coupled with the former. Were you the world's queen I would not wed you! I swore to humble your pride and punish your cruelty, or die. Are you humbled? Are you punished? I think you are, and I am satisfied. For your sex's sake I grieve—for your own I rejoice. Human nature is avenged! And now, lest you should not quite understand me and my motives—lest those who hear me might still doubt either—know that I am already the possessor of a young and beautiful bride, a virtuous and amiable woman. Know more I am Albert of Ladenberg, the third brother of the two youths you so bar-

barously murdered, when one word of dissuasion for mercy's sake, out of the many you have lavished on me from spurious and dishonouring passion, had saved them to their country, to the world, and to me! I do not curse you; but even now in your humiliation I hate as I have all along despised you!"

With these words the knight dashed spurs into his steed, and both seemed to fly like some winged animal forth of the place. Before the amazement caused by the scene had subsided, they were out of sight; but ere the clatter of the courser's hoofs died away, Countess Kunigund was a corpse. Her proud heart broke as the last words of the avenger fell on her ear.

To those who inquired, it was soon known that Sir Albert had for months practised his favourite steed to accomplish by degrees every difficult passage of horsemanship, until he at length found him quite fit to undertake the most difficult of all. But the great mass of those who saw the feat, and heard the denunciations which brought death to the Countess Kunigund, persisted to the last in saying and be-

lieving the whole to have been a delusion and he a fiend.

Such is the common tradition to this day; and every blast of wind that whispers through the ruins of the Kynast, or blows in the glen below, is converted by the shuddering peasants into the groans of the heart-broken lady, and the undying curses of those who died in her unworthy cause.

HEIDELBERG CASTLE;

AND ITS LEGENDS.

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AND ITS LEGENDS.

THE chances of travelling—for there was but little, if any, premeditated design—brought me one day to Heidelberg. I had heard of the place, as who has not? The beauty of its situation, its castle, its university, have been babbled of and buzzed about by all who, either singly or in swarms, have fluttered over the surface of German scenery and its institutions. But all that I had read or heard of this place had left very imperfect notions in my mind. Germany altogether, as well as in its details, had ever brought with it associations of confusion until I visited the country. Its many subdivisions, its perpetual changes of territorial limits, and the ever shifting shades of its religious and literary opinions, seemed to defy all effort at classification. I never could come to any positive

ideas about any given place. The whole country appeared to me a huge tangled mass of contradictions, which it was absolutely necessary to see, before one could unravel it.

I dropt, then, upon Heidelberg as it were from the clouds. It was the first station that fixed my notions as to the country; and many agreeable facts have since connected it in my memory, by a chain of gilded links. I am not now about to separate all of those, or to give in detail the various recollections they unite. I leave to other writers to describe those rare combinations, composing scenery that needs fear no rivalry in its kind. Ridges of lofty hills, rich in forest clothing, looking down at either side on a fine stream; distant mountains, bathed as it would seem by the majestic Rhine; and all the varying objects of immediate interest which a painter could desire to unite, form a mass of beauty which might be easily frittered out into minute descriptions, that would after all leave the reality untold. The scene is one which requires a wholesale admiration; and having given that to it, to an extent far beyond the common, I, at least, cannot undertake a bit-by-

bit enumeration of units in such a total. But one object I have selected, because it is in itself a whole blending sublimely with the general aspect of the scene it dignifies, but in its appearance and its history a most unusual mixture of material with moral interest.

The Castle of Heidelberg, in its present aspect a stupendous ruin, was long a mansion of great magnificence. It was not the work of one sovereign nor of one age. Begun in the fourteenth century and finished in the seventeenth, it possesses an extraordinary variety of architectural character, and connects the widely contrasted styles of rugged feudality with those of civilized despotism. Nor is it merely in the variety of tastes which preside over its construction that it is peculiar. The capricious forms in which fate has visited it with destruction have not been less remarkable. Built in parts as the stronghold of mere mountain chiefs, in others as the decorated residences of royal princes, ruin has fallen upon all in most incongruous shapes. Here gapes a tower, with walls that seem to have been moulded by giant hands, riven by a fierce explosion, and wrenched from its rooted

hold of centuries in the deep earth. There is a range of castellated walls and rich façades, seared and scorched by lightning and the flames that burst from its ignition. In other places are imperfect turrets mouldering in the rottenness of time, and again are seen deep marks of the desolation caused by battery and bombardment, with the dilapidations of modern Vandalism and mere mischief. There are plenty of "Itineraries" to give dates and authorities for every one of those details.

The ruins, viewed from the river's banks, or in any aspect below their site, give no idea of their effect when closely visited, or gazed on from the mountains above. The mixture of stern Gothic, with modern florid architecture, in which the latter predominates, is injurious to the whole as a monument of the picturesque. The flat front wall of what would seem to have been the main building, studded with windows and surmounted by pointed gables, rising above the roof, offend the savage dignity of the round towers by which they are flanked, and the rugged buttresses and irregular battlements, which support the whole mass of building, and seem

hewn out of the granite acclivity on which it stretches its broad length. Whenever this connecting skreen of front wall crumbles from its present too perfect attitude, like a curtain falling from before the interior mass of ruin which it hides, the view will be infinitely improved in romantic effect. As it is, the first feeling it gives while looking up at it from the river's level, is one of comparison, all to its disadvantage, with many a less vast but more venerable ruin.

But when, from the mountain heights above it, the astonished eye takes in at once the whole and all its parts, grasps its prodigious extent, and separates its most minute details, then it appears in its true majesty. Then its vast quadrangle, massive walls, broad battlements, and profound fosses, are viewed in awe and admiration. Then the moral uses of decay come home to us. The expanding mind embraces broad intervals of time, and plunges deep in the secrets which seem buried in the mouldering mass beneath. Every turret and terrace seems alive with the mysteries of tradition. The courts and halls are peopled with beings of by gone days. Generation on generation sweep rapidly

along. Refined magnificence, rude power, and savage strength furnish their rapid illustrations to each change which fancy pictures, in conjuring up past periods of splendour, chivalry, and barbarism. The dark ages and the bright are at once before us. The thirsty imagination drinks in the broad stream of history; or pierces for some hidden spring of romance, that bubbles on its flower-fringed banks.

But thus seen, all is a maze of admiration and ardour. We gaze and wonder, create and analyse, as if we worked on chaos. Masses of mental formation are before us; but no forms spring out in individual relief, no actual group is traced in the distinct lineaments of its time. No story woven into a compact similitude of any given epoch. Costume and character, events and scenes, are all commingled. Fact blends with fancy; and a vapoury haze enwraps and shadows the whole.

To reach any positive and connected train of thought, we must descend into the arena. We are by degrees convinced of this. We feel above the fitting level for inquiry. We look at the rugged path, and pick our steps by anticipation,

down the tangled brushwood and shattered granite of the road. But we move not—the limbs acknowledge the lassitude of the mind—overstrained imagination has unstrung the sinews—and we struggle long with the listless languor which chains us to the spot; as we strive at times to break from the undefinable thraldom of sleep.

I had the good fortune to make my way, for the first time, into the ruins, by the most difficult and least agreeable of their approaches. It is the old and narrow street, on which one drops as it were from the steep hill behind; the only carriage way, and that almost impracticable, leading from the buildings of the university. The houses which form this street, seen as you approach the town, or from the lower parts of it, are peculiarly picturesque; their white walls, slated roofs, and smoking chimneys growing, it might be fancied, amidst the thick foliage of the hill side—a village in a wilderness. But the illusion vanishes, in no very pleasant shape and accompanied by no very fragrant odours,—unlike the pageants which we read of and believe, when childhood gives warrant for fairy land,—as we toil

up the broken pavement, washed by a mountain stream, that cannot however cleanse the hovels at either side. Had I burthened myself with a guide, I had assuredly mounted by a smoother path, descended perhaps by some trim-cut way, into the beautiful pleasure grounds at the rear of the castle; and so have missed the surprised delight with which I was almost overpowered, on abruptly entering the *avant cour*, passing under the portal, and standing on the bridge that connects this approach with the main quadrangle of the structure.

Overpowered may sound exaggerated. But it is in reality the word most applicable to my sensations. I never was so struck with any view of mere mortal power, or of the joint devastations of time and man, as when I cast my eyes to the right and left of that bridge and gazed on the stupendous evidences of strength and ruin.

On either hand is a deep valley or glen, formed of the old fosses of the place, with irregular mounds of earth and grass-covered rubbish, hurled down from the battlements which cannon and decay have shattered. Trees of full grown height have sprung from the prolific soil,

which is watered by the mountain streams that gush through the outer walls, and trickle through their verdant tapestry of ivy and other creeping shrubs. Except some poplars, which outshoot the rest, the trees, though apparently of a century's growth, do not reach near to the bridge from which they are viewed, and the effect of depth is thereby prodigiously increased. The height and bulk of the battlements is quite proportionate; and the massive extent of irregular buildings, seen all around, harmonize with the rest. But when the eye is caught and riveted by one particular object near at hand, every accessory point of view is for the moment forgotten. I allude to the ruined round tower, called "the Blown-up Tower," which was split asunder and torn open from top to bottom, by an explosion of gunpowder during the attempted destruction of the castle in 1676. I could not measure the thickness of the walls nor the height of this tower—and if I have heard its dimensions, I forget them; but nothing I had ever seen had given me such a notion of material bulk. The architect who planned the erection was only sur-

passed by the engineer who presided at its ruin. Time never could have destroyed it single-handed. The half that remains in its original place is as solid and secure to-day as on that of its completion, and the moiety that was torn from it and cast down, reposes half erect in the earth into which it sunk, unimpaired and entire, as if it only waited the application of some giant lever to raise it to its original position, and reconstruct the huge building, which was dislocated, but could not be destroyed.

Many other individual objects deserve mention —and have amply met with it, in profuse descriptions of this memorable place, most particularly in the work of M. de Graimberg, a French painter, who has for twenty-two years been a fixture in the only habitable apartment of the ruins, devoting a whole life of talent to the delineations of the abounding *chefs d'œuvre* of architecture and sculpture which he is thus snatching from oblivion. This fact speaks volumes as to the manifold treasures of the place for antiquary and artist. On those topics I do not mean to enlarge. My purposes take a dif-

ferent path. The first burst of admiration over —and many an after visit having tempered its intensity—I cast about, as usual, for some traits of moral action, illustrative of the place, and of those human feelings which touch our sympathies nearer than all the accumulated wonders of cement and stone. I found the place rich in traditions, romance, and history.

The three epochs to which this desultory preface has made allusion all invited me. In the first, there was the thrilling legend of Welleda, or Jetta, the virgin magician of the valley of the Neckar, from whom the name of Jettenbuhl has been given to the hill on which the castle stands; and whose wild prophecies and mysterious career were closed by a tragic death, in the glen called, from the circumstance of her fate, the Wolf's Brun.

Then there was the painful story of our English princess Elizabeth, daughter of James I., and wife of the Elector Frederick V., the unfortunate King of Bohemia.

The first of these subjects is almost too remote and apocryphal to stand alone, as a type of the place. The second too real, too much within

the province of domestic history, and already as I understand transplanted into romance *.

But a third subject started up, among the prolific associations of chivalry which could not fail to have become naturalized in such a site. This last I chose for my illustration, although it was impossible to reject the fairy legend of the Wolf's Brun, and I forthwith proceed to tell both tales; satisfied if I in some measure excite the interest of my readers for the scene on which they were acted.

* In "Count Frederick of Lunenberg," by Miss Porter, mentioned, most honourably, by the late Miss Benger in her life of Elizabeth.

THE LEGEND

OF

THE WOLF'S BRUN.

THE LEGEND

OF

THE WOLF'S BRUN.

Who will walk with me to the ruins of Heidelberg Castle, and hear a tale of the olden time? Who can find a charm in the story of a beautiful girl, who preferred love to power, and sacrificed herself to her feelings? Let such a one listen to the story of Welleda, and in all the extravagance of its fiction believe it true, while he lingers on the enchanted spot to which it has lent a fairy spell.

In the high north, where giant Nature smiles not, like a nursing mother, on her wild and wayward offspring; where the ocean lashes the bases of granite crags; and where forests of dusky fir trees bend and creak in the storm; there dwelt Ingald Ilroda, one of the most formidable of the Scandinavian kings. In his youth he had visit-

ed the south, and captivated the maiden fancy of the timid Alanda, who preferred this adventurous son of Odin to any stranger knight in her father's halls. His youthful and severe beauty awed and delighted her; and she consented to become the pride of the northern king, and to return with him to his frozen country. Alas! she knew not that it was peopled with a race of men torpid as the eternal winter against which they struggle—rude as the rock in the foaming surge—and furious as the billow that breaks over it. The transient and burning summer of such a clime scorches the senses without warming them; and the iron winter closes upon the year, as cold and cutting as hatred on unbridled passion. No genial spring is there, to dew the blossoms with tepid tears; no autumn to mature the ripening fruit.

And here the delicate Alanda was doomed to pine away the remainder of her days: but she was the mother of Welleda, and was not that joy enough? The fair child united in herself the sensibility of one parent and the energy of the other, blended and tempered into the mild lustre of female excellence. Often have

her light blue eyes, shaded by their glossy lashes, gazed upon the pale beautiful mother, as n consciousness of her sufferings; yet the tears of that mother appeared happiness to Welleda, in comparison with the coarse and boisterous pleasures of the women of the north.

Her father seldom noticed her. He was almost constantly engaged in warlike pursuits or long hunting excursions; and when at home, surrounded by boon companions in the banquet hall, quaffing from his golden drinking horns, until the natural sternness of his disposition grew into violence and fierceness. Then the innocent child fled away from the sound of riot and debauchery, to hide herself in the apartment of her trembling and sorrow-stricken mother.

On one of these occasions, the king, already inflamed with wine, sent his page to demand the presence of the queen in the banquet hall, that she might sing to him and his companions. The page bore away Alanda's harp, but the poor minstrel at first refused to follow, until the young Welleda, taking her hand in both hers, said fondly, "Come, dearest mother, I will go with you, and Ingald Ilroda will not be angry."

Alanda kissed her child's forehead; and excited by the hope of interesting her lord's feelings in favour of the sweet daughter of their early love, she gracefully entered the hall; and striking from her harp some wild and touching symphonies, she sang with chastened pride the following stanzas.

What form is that which fades so fast?
Whose sighs are those that pierce the blast?
Some mourner weeps within yon towers,
And chides the slowly-passing hours,
Unpitied and alone.
Can this be she, erst seen to bloom—
Her valley's rose—now sunk in gloom,
And with'ring with each stroke of fate?
Ah! ye will mourn, when 'tis too late,
And she you weep is gone.

The royal oak once stooped to clasp
The simple wild flower; but the grasp
Of gnarled branch and rugged stem
Hath marr'd the Rose's diadem,
Its leaves are falling fast!
One tender blossom still remains,—
Ah, save it from its mother's pains!
And plant it gem-like in some shrine,
Where rose with rose may intertwine,
Safe sheltered from the blast!

As the last words died away upon the music-breathing lips of Alanda, the harp fell from her hands, and she sank into the outstretched arms of her husband, whose iron bosom had been subdued by the melody of her sweet voice. Little Welleda sobbed as if her heart would break, and clung round her father's knees, approaching him for the first time in her life without fear. Meanwhile, the rough chieftains rose from the table, in evident emotion, and formed a group around the royal pair. When Ingald Ilroda could speak, he exclaimed with tender vehemence, "Live, live, Alanda; and if any wish of yours respecting our child can be gratified, I swear by Odin it shall not be denied to you!"

Alanda, half fainting with the sudden joy of success, roused herself to exertion on hearing these words of encouragement. She pressed the hand of her husband to her heart, and implored him in moving accents to enable her to die in peace, and bless him in her last moments, by promising that when she was no more, Welleda should be conveyed to the family of her mother by faithful servants, and receive her marriage dowry as an inheritance.

"It shall be done," replied Ingald, looking at his child with a degree of affection altogether unusual with him; nay, he even drew Welleda towards him, and stroked her auburn locks as gently as he could. "It shall be done," repeated he, "I have sworn it. This child would ill endure the climate and country that have wasted her mother. Come hither, Wredmar," said he, to the most aged, and at the same time the most remarkable of his guests,—"Henceforward I confide Welleda to your care: you have heard what I have vowed to her mother, and you are not ignorant of my approaching enterprise. To-morrow I set out for the plains of Upsala: you shall remain here with Alanda and Welleda; and if any evil chance befall me, convey them immediately to the south." The grey-headed old man bowed assent to the commands of his king; who pressed his wife and child to his valiant bosom, and returned to table with his companions, leaving Wredmar to lead the queen and Welleda to their apartments.

Alanda was still sleeping, when the trampling of horses under the castle gate echoed through her apartment. The ominous sound awoke her,

and she flew to the window to catch a last glimpse of her once adored Ingald. She felt that she should never again behold his dreadfully beautiful countenance—that they were for ever separated; and she called on him to return, in piercing accents of misery, whilst burning tears coursed one another down her pallid cheeks. Ingald Ilroda could not hear her; the cold and bitter morning blast carried away the parting words of Alanda. She clasped her hands, and returned to her bed, to throw herself upon it, and weep bitterly. Welleda had crept from an adjoining cabinet; and seeing her mother lying apparently senseless, began to cry piteously and call upon her by name. The welcome and beloved voice of her child restored Alanda to herself; and taking her in her arms, she ceased weeping, but sobbed, and was for some time silent.

The society of Wredmar was an unspeakable relief to Alanda, who had been so long without a friend. She treated him with unlimited confidence, and looked upon him as the faithful and accomplished guardian of Welleda. She knew that she was dying, for her constitution had long since given way to the pressure of stifled sorrow,

and now the beautiful ruin was daily sinking into decay. Wredmar was skilled in the healing art, and did all he could to prolong Alanda's life; but the consolation he imparted to her maternal heart, by promising to superintend the education of Welleda, and never to desert her, was the most effectual of all his remedies. With her child Alanda was cheerful. She described to her the varied beauties of nature in the land to which she was going, with all the enthusiasm of an exile. Then she would press Welleda to her bosom, and tell her of another world, and of another God besides Odin. But Wredmar always interrupted the conversation, in his turn, when Alanda ventured to touch on these topics.

Thus passed several weeks, when Wredmar received an exulting despatch from Ingald, relating to him the accomplishment of a deed of horror, till then unequalled in the savage north. He had invited six noble kings to a feast of reconciliation, and, in the security of hospitality and friendship, had treacherously murdered them all, and made himself master of their territories. The stern Wallkyries carried them in flaming arms to Vallhalla, to assuage the burning pain of

death in groves of everlasting coolness. But the fire of vengeance continued burning on earth, and first of all fell upon Alanda's guiltless head, devouring her, as its purest victim. She was mad,—she knew not her own child;—"Wolf's brat, wolf's brat," she exclaimed, shuddering, "thou wilt be devoured by one of thy race!" and then, softening into semi-recollection, she would exclaim—"Poor child! thou too must perish by misguided love!" These prophetic words were uttered too often not to make a deep impression on the young mind of the unfortunate Welleda. She had heard, too, the story of her father's having been once conquered in angry combat by a playfellow of his youth, which inferiority caused him to weep bitterly; when his foster-father, Swipdag the blind, caused the heart of a living wolf to be torn out and dressed for the youth, who devoured it, under the impression that he would in future overcome all his enemies.

Poor Welleda! her broken-hearted mother died, and she lost her only friend; for let it not be supposed that the wily magician Wredmar had any pretensions to that title. Great mis-

fortunes mature a strong mind; and Welleda's ripened into reflection and power. But joy had fled away from her youthful heart—for her beloved mother was dead, and had not even blessed her! Moreover, her prophetic and maniac words haunted her like a spell. She considered herself as destined to be unhappy, and began life with the morbid sensibility so unfavourable to youth.

Immediately after the burial of her lamented parent, she was hurried away by Wredmar to another of her father's castles, situated at the source of the Maelar, in Sudermania; for it appeared that Prince Iwar, son of one of the murdered kings, was mustering forces to surprise Ingald Ilroda. Ingald arrived unexpectedly one evening at the castle, and abruptly entered the room where Wredmar and Welleda were sitting. Welleda was busy at her loom; and her father, disregarding her presence, required from Wredmar the exertion of those supernatural powers, of which Welleda had begun to entertain some suspicion. Wredmar replied to Ingald in a bold and somewhat scornful manner, which gave Welleda a painful impression of Wredmar's su-

periority over the king,—" Yes, it will be easy for me to command my spirits to roll up the huge rocks that lie scattered in the plain below, and form with them an impregnable rampart. But then you have offended Thor, by the violation of hospitality; and the Nornes are taking the part of the assassinated kings, and I cannot reach *them*. However, if you wish me to protect you against Iwar's vengeance, you must give up Welleda to me, and I shall separate her destiny from yours, and rule it exclusively." Ingald Ilroda did not hesitate; he resigned his child; and when Welleda heard the conclusion of the unnatural compact, she felt that she was lost. She was carried to her couch, swooning and insensible. She wished to sleep—to forget the miserable future that was opening upon her. But her mother's form, uttering the dreadful prophecy, haunted her all night, and chased away the recollection of each sweet endearment. She saw, too, her father's colossal figure, standing as it had done the previous night before the dying embers, leaning on his spear, and brooding fearful deeds; and last of all, the malignant triumph of Wredmar's haggard countenance, as

it glanced towards her, completed her despair. From these sad visions she was roused by a heavy rolling sound, like distant thunder. She approached the narrow casement of her chamber, and saw with horror that Wredmar was fulfilling his part of the compact; for monstrous and misshapen crags, entire masses of granite, were bounding across the plain with immense velocity, and ascending the steep hill on which the castle stood, with equal ease. They had already formed part of a gigantic wall, upon which two war-chariots might drive abreast, and defy the enemy beneath. Yet there was no living thing to direct their motions! Welleda shrunk back, and saw, with increased dismay, the angry form of Wredmar standing near her. "Perverse child," exclaimed he, "has power no charms for you? Is your father's safety nothing, that you presume to condemn and hate his benefactor?" Welleda could not reply, her tongue refused to move: she blushed and remained silent. Wredmar then drew from his bosom and presented to her a beauteous purple flower, saying "Here child, I have brought you the flower you have long wished for, take it as a pledge of my forgive-

ness." Welleda was glad of any opportunity of pleasing her tutor, and gratefully received his gift. The fragrance of the flower was so delicious that she seemed willing to inhale all its perfume, when she suddenly fainted, and was immediately carried by the skilful Wredmar to the sea-shore. When she awoke from her trance, she beheld a purple tent stretched over her, in the inverted form of her favourite and mystic flower, the golden cords of which seemed to represent its stamina. She cautiously raised the rich curtain, and for the first time in her life she saw the sea, bearing on its proud waves a magnificent vessel, on the prow of which was Wredmar. A boat was in readiness to bring him ashore; and he approached his lovely pupil with courtesy and even kindness, willing to let her feel that if he had power, she also had influence. On entering the boat, he perceived the purple flower which he had given Welleda the preceding day lying by her side. "Unthinking child!" exclaimed he, "how little you value my gifts. Be more careful of that precious flower; you know not how much depends upon it,—we may want it again." Welleda, abashed by the reproof, and unable to reply, took the flower and

placed it in her bosom. At the same moment she felt herself lifted into the vessel, and in the next, saw herself receding from the land of her birth. She knew that she was entirely in the power of the mysterious Wredmar,—she was on the broad bosom of the immeasurable ocean without attendants—the green land became grey and indistinct—it was soon enveloped in mists. She stretched her delicate arms round the mast, as if she would arrest the flying speed of the vessel; she called upon Wredmar to give her back to her royal father—to restore her to the confidential servants of the household—to convey her to the castle on the banks of the Maeler. "Behold what you would desire," replied the malicious fiend, showing her a magic mirror, in which she saw the castle, with its dreadful rampart of rocks, surrounded by armed men, who were exulting in the terrific flames that rose from the centre of the pile. Welleda thought she heard the shrieks of torture and despair rushing upwards with the fierce element. Wredmar spoke,—"Thus perishes Ingald Ilroda: he is sacrificing himself and his followers to the goddesses of vengeance!"

Welleda's tears were instantly dried; but in-

dignation burst from her coral lips, unchecked by the consciousness of her own helplessness. "Then you have deceived my royal father, perfidious sorcerer! and deprived him of his child, without ensuring his safety. Had you told him how limited was your power, he had bravely sallied forth to the battle field, and sold his life as dearly as he could!" Wredmar did not interrupt the torrent of Welleda's reproaches. When she had exhausted herself, he assumed increased dignity, and desired her to take warning by her father's fate. He reminded her of that father's guilt; and finally almost persuaded her that his self-inflicted punishment was the noblest atonement he could make for it. Welleda remembered, too, the time when she had loved the old man with all the playful fondness of childhood. She had heard her mother speak of him with respect and regard, and from that moment she was awed into implicit obedience.

Many months passed away, and Welleda saw many countries; but found no place where she could wish to dwell. She shuddered at the recollection of the countries of the north, and the intoxicating pleasures of the south sickened her.

She learned with rapture from her tutor all the mysteries of nature, and acquired powers of which she was herself unconscious, until accident and necessity made her acquainted with them. Wredmar, after various efforts, became enraged at her firm but calm resistance to his inducements to learn the darker portions of his magic arts. He tried all means to entice her into his snares, but in vain. The innate purity of the maiden's mind protected her effectually against his blandishments; and having no longer the power to deprive her of the influence secured by her possession of the enchanted flower, he parted from her, reminding her of her mother's words.

Welleda was now in the virgin bloom of youth. Her graceful figure was swelling into perfection. Her airy movements were like the dance of the floating zephyr. Her eyes were the faithful beacons of the glorious mind within; and the rest was as lovely as the blossom of early spring. When she traversed the blooming valleys of the south the summer birds sang to her, the flowers sent up their fragrance, and offered her the honey from their cells, the mists rolled

away, and the divine rainbow itself seemed to encircle and protect her. Fairy-land seemed to grow beneath her feet. She was at once the creature and the creator of enchantment. In one of her wanderings she chanced to reach the valley of the Neckar. She stood upon the heather-covered hills, and surveyed the lovely landscape glowing all around. She felt that this was the place destined for her—that she had made the discovery of a home—that her mother's spirit might even dwell in it, and contemplate her power and her happiness. Perhaps, too, she might discover in it a race of beings in harmony with such a display of nature's superiority; for despite her mother's prophecy and Wredmar's curse, she longed to find some one to whom her soul might unite its inmost sympathies.

In the highest state of enthusiasm, she called into existence, by her magic flower, a splendid little castle, crowned with costly turrets and spires, and surrounded by enchanting gardens; where marble basins, curious exotics, and graceful trees combined to form the luxury of retirement, and the delight of Welleda. Yes, reader, upon the very spot where the present noble ruin

of Heidelberg Castle stands, there was Welleda's magic dwelling, which struck a pious awe into its village neighbourhood. The pious fisherman crossed himself as his little boat stood opposite the enchanted castle, and the rash huntsman who found himself unexpectedly near it, started back, as if pursued by his own hounds, and fled far away, not in terror, but from reverence. Welleda saw the influence of superiority over the ignorant; and perceived that she must assume some familiar form, to be able to approach the timid peasants, and administer relief to their necessities. She therefore amused her fancy and gratified her feelings by wandering about the mountains in the form of an old woman. The shepherds and old huntsmen called her Jetta, by which name she was generally known in the surrounding villages. They accepted her gifts, which were often herbs and ointments for the cure of various diseases; and many had the boldness to profit by her skill, though the villagers shook their heads and hoped they held no traffic with the powers of darkness.

A year had passed away, and Welleda sat by a marble fountain, surveying her own image

in its limpid waters. "And hast thou found none to know and love thee, Welleda?" said she to herself. "Does not that open brow invite confidence? Does it impart none? Is there any malignancy in my tearful eyes? And oh, my heart! has that no human feeling?" As she uttered these complainings, a beautiful white bird—the last gift of Wredmar—perched upon her shoulder, and fluttering his silver wings, touched her lovely lips with his bill. Welleda returned his caresses, saying,—"Dost thou know my thoughts?—Assist me, then!" The bird immediately flew away; and Welleda retreated to a laboratory within her fairy halls, where it was her custom to pass many of her leisure hours.

It was a lovely summer's morning. Each little blade of grass was trembling with its delicate dewy nourishment; each flower seemed to sleep, unconscious of the rising sun; the air was one delicious perfume; the feathery beech-trees climed the mountain height, and the crystal Neckar beneath reflected all this beauty on its surface. The youthful wanderer might lie down on the mossy bed of the woods, and dream a

thousand dreams of love and ambition without being interrupted, or knowing how many tranquil hours had glided by. The young and handsome sportsman Ferrand, was musing in the forest depths, reclining beneath a rock, from which a spring was bubbling forth its music. He had been pursuing a deer all the early part of the morning, and had chosen this sequestered spot in which to snatch a few hours of sleep. But Ferrand could not sleep. Ambition lifted him above his lowly birth. The roof of his father's cottage was too low for his aspirings; and in this state of mind the wings of fancy carried him over the world, and beyond it. As Ferrand's mind grew conscious of its superiority he often fell into vague musings like the present—the feverish pulse of undeveloped talent was beating—he panted for a wider sphere; he felt himself confined within the limits of his native hills. As he lay beneath the rock and saw them rising in every direction, he thought they even weighed upon his brain; and then—amongst all who dwelt upon the banks of the beautiful river—there was not one fellow being to ease his swelling bosom of its undefined longings!

The grown-up playmates of his childhood had begun to complain of his unsocial disposition. They said he was proud, and at length went so far as to insinuate some dangerous cause of estrangement from their village sports. The jealous maidens whispered that he had often been seen in the immediate neighbourhood of the magic castle; and one simple girl, who really loved him, confessed that she had had an interview with its mysterious inhabitant, on his account. She declared that, at the last full moon, she had approached the garden pavilion without venturing to raise her eyes from the ground, until the sound of silver bells and a soft fluttering in the air induced her to look up. She then saw above her head a beautiful white bird, which gently touching her cheek with his wings, flew towards the pavilion window, which opened to receive him. In the next moment a lady stood there, dressed in glittering white, and covered with a long silvery veil. The lady held the white bird on her taper finger, and spoke in sweet and encouraging accents; but the poor maiden could not understand the words, her senses became instantly confused and she fainted.

The next morning she awoke and found herself in her own little cottage bed, and no one had remarked her absence. As soon as this marvellous story had travelled up and down the village, and was duly magnified by each wonder-loving gossip, a new interest was excited. The young men insisted upon the impossibility of a beautiful woman concealing herself from the admiring gaze of mortals. The maidens declared that no woman possessed of supernatural powers would deprive herself of personal charms; whilst Heinricks, and other old huntsmen of the hills, assured their younger friends that they had frequently met the sorceress gathering herbs, and that she was nothing more than an old wrinkled infirm woman, whom no one need care to meet in the day time, or wish to see again.

The moody Ferrand was the last to hear of the maiden's adventure; for no one wished to make him angry or increase his coldness. And then, though almost every other person knew it, it was always a secret. At length, however, Ferrand's favourite sister related it to him, as she sat spinning at her wheel. It was delightful! Now he had something to suit his daring

spirit—to exalt his imagination—to excite his feelings, and perhaps reward them. He resolved to penetrate as far as the interior of the enchantress's castle, be the consequences what they might. Nay, he wondered that he had not thought of this enterprise before. What a world it might open to him! a world of mystery and power. He passed the night in fanciful dreams, and left his father's cot before daybreak. He continued his wanderings until he sank, overcome by sudden languor, beneath the rock. Suddenly his dog started up, and Ferrand's quick eye caught the mystic bird as it stooped within his reach. He seized his bow, the arrow sped from his rarely erring hand, the bird soared aloft with a piercing cry, and a few drops of blood fell upon Ferrand's arm. He had not forgotten the white bird in the peasant girl's story; and he resolved to possess himself of his wounded prey. With his usual impetuosity he rushed forward, catching every now and then a glimpse of the bird, until he found himself upon the very verge of the enchanted castle. He paused—he stopped to recover breath—perhaps resolution! The carved gates flew open to receive him, and

with all the madness of unripened enthusiasm he darted across the fairy threshold. Within was a glowing paradise of sweets. Balmy shrubs and exquisite flowers breathed forth their greetings, and the sparkling fountains laughed in the sunbeams. Ferrand, gazing around him with a beating heart, acknowledged the taste and power of the wonderful creature who had brought all this luxury to embellish one little spot of earth; but amidst the blooming thickets he sought for her in vain. At length, through a delicate vista of birch-trees, he beheld this embodied spirit of excellence! By a marble basin, that held her image trembling on its surface, sat Welleda; the purple flower of Wredmar decked her bosom; her waist was pressed by a silver zone; and through clusters of ringlets shone a brilliant star on her alabaster forehead. The wounded bird was on her hand, and drops of gore trickled from its breast. Her feet were clad in purple sandals, and rested on the patient neck of a tamed leopard. Her white garments floated round her, like the mist of the valley when it seeks to hide the blushing earth from the fervent sun. Oh, Welleda!—wert thou

not beautiful? Yes!—more beautiful than the awakening blush of spring, the glow of summer, or the refulgence of autumn.

Ferrand lowered his eyes, to gaze upon the watery image; for to meet the look of the original was too much. Love! delightful love, requires but one moment in which to loose his unerring shaft. Welleda sat motionless—Ferrand stood entranced. Both saw for the first time, the one—the only one whom each could love. But pass ah! the threshold of delight—who dares to it? Who would break down the exquisite barrier?

Welleda uttered the faint but irresistible cry of helplessness, sinking back upon her pillow of flowers; and Ferrand, inspired by this movement, rushed towards the basin, to throw himself at her feet, in a state very similar to her own. No malicious genius was there to note the advancing steps of Time, nothing was there to rouse recollection from its delicious intoxication. Welleda and Ferrand—knowing each other, as if known for years—yet fearing to dissolve the spell of silence and mutual admiration, gazed on in rapture and pride. Yes, pride; they were proud of finding their imagination of perfection

realised in each other. Let it be so, pride is no bad instrument; let it go by what name it may. It will at least add strength and independence to any feeling, if it dare not present itself in its naked identity.

A sigh burst from the heart of Welleda, an ominous sigh—the breath of love—the acknowledgement of passion—the relief of sorrow—Welleda felt her danger, and dared it. It was in vain that the purple flower of Wredmar closed its leaves and drooped. Love's glorious ecstasy could hear no prophetic warning. Welleda had lived a century in one short minute, and knew all that had hitherto been concealed from her—all in fact that was worth knowing. She felt the glow of sympathy, and would have died rather than have lost that one bright hour of existence. Perhaps it was the happiest she ever knew. The rainbow is more beautiful than sunshine.

With the peculiar instinct of delicacy, Welleda diverted Ferrand's attention from herself—or rather seemed to do so, for it was almost necessary to speak. "You have wounded my bird, Ferrand," said Welleda, in a soft subdued tone. Ferrand started at the human and yet ethereal

sound. With a sudden sob, an almost convulsive spasm, he answered—"Forgive me, beautiful Welleda—I knew not that it was yours."

Oh, how easy to forgive! or rather, how inadmissible is the word, where love sanctions and equalizes every thing! Welleda held out her lily hand, and Ferrand bathed it with tears and kisses. It was enough. How lovely are the wild-flowers of the spring—how simple yet fantastic their forms and combinations—and ah! how poetical their language! Just so the infant dawn of happy love!

When Ferrand entered his father's cottage that evening, he found its inhabitants in gloom and discontent. He scarcely knew how to account for this, as he involuntarily stooped at its entrance—until he recollected that he had been absent since day-break, and now returned, not only without game—but even without his bow and quiver. These last had been left on the edge of the marble basin.

"Do you stoop to enter your father's dwelling, Ferrand?" exclaimed one of his elder sisters, impatiently. "Your pride will certainly be

your ruin; pray Heaven we may not share it!" added she, with fervent selfishness.

Fernand was annoyed, but would vouchsafe no answer. Amalie, his youngest and favourite sister, silently took his hand, and looked timidly yet inquiringly into his face, as if she felt herself responsible for some awful deed of rashness. This was more intelligible than the ill-natured scorn of Bertha. "Fear nothing, dear Amalie," whispered he, "but let me love you better than ever—for you have made me the happiest of mortals." Amalie sighed, shuddered, and hid her face in her hands.

At this moment the petulant old Heinrich entered the cottage. He had been searching the neighbouring forest for the beloved Fernand, his only and, as he thought, erring son. "Well, Fernand—here you are—God be praised! and your old father has been looking for you high and low, at the close of a weary day; and neither you nor I have any thing to give the good wife for supper! How's this, my boy? where have you been all day?"

These were startling questions. The subter-

fuge of invention was too mean for Ferrand; it would even have injured the lady of his love—for it would have lowered him. Love's votary feels himself identified with the object he adores. He maintains his idol in colossal dignity; for to give it the proportions of common-place, is but to degrade himself. Ferrand therefore could neither utter an untruth, nor mention to vulgar ears the superior being whom he now worshipped. He preferred risking his father's displeasure and his sister's suspicions. He was silent.

Ferrand's confusion was great. His senses were bewildered. The meanness of the cottage, when compared with the refinements he had just left, was altogether stupifying and revolting. Was he the same man? Was he Ferrand, the only son of old Heinrick the hunter? He scarcely recognized himself—no wonder then that no one else should know him. One bold flight had carried him over the surface of common-place things, and he unconsciously looked down upon them. Who will blame him? What a surface it is to toil—to spin—to eat—to drink—to sleep—in endless repetition! But for such

as Ferrand there is more than this. To feel—to hope—to dare—to love! What an emphasis was now laid upon his being—he lived for another! What an antidote to all the unworthy stirrings of human nature! Happy Ferrand!

Did Ferrand wait for sunrise? or who was it that sprang from rock to rock, and ran along the velvet turf that bordered the magic castle in the grey dawn of morning? It was indeed Ferrand. He had forced himself to pass the night in his father's cottage, by way of resolutely doing something that was odious to himself, and thus satisfying his conscience for what was to come. The first streak of light therefore emancipated him—the task was over. Welleda had reclined upon her couch, in half-forgetfulness, but her mind was far from tranquil. And when she roused herself to salute the first beams of the sun, she found the purple flower of Wredmar—her precious talisman—transformed into a snake! and curling hatefully within the folds of her vest. She seized it, and endeavoured for some time in vain to shake it from her hand. At length the white bird perceived it, and as it fell

to the ground caught it up in his beak and devoured it. Welleda watched in breathless expectation—the bird fell dead at her feet!

"I am lost—forsaken—alone!" she almost groaned. "Wredmar's revenge is all but complete—let it be so!" she added, after a pause of intense feeling; "I have gained more than I can lose." So saying, she fled from the grotto, and hurried through the garden to the place of meeting, and there was Ferrand ready to receive her.

It would indeed be dreadful if there were not something to reward the self-sacrificing spirit of woman! Welleda forgot the cloud that overshadowed her, in the bliss of loving and being loved. Each little word thrilled through her every nerve; each observation secured to itself an importance in her bosom; and thus the noiseless hours glided by, until the sun had risen to his meridian height. She then led her devoted Ferrand to a marble hall, in the centre of which was a table loaded with fruits, vases, and flowers, fit and only food for aërialized lovers—who shun the grosser nutriment of other mortals. If Welleda presented the delicious pine-apple to

Ferrand—he ate it devoutly; and if he, in his turn, chose from the profusion one bunch of grapes more tempting than the rest—she received it as a token of affection. This exquisite repast finished, Welleda proposed to initiate Ferrand into the mysteries of her magic chemistry, and led him to her laboratory, a small apartment that looked towards the plains of the Rhine. "It is here," said she, "that I used to pass the greater proportion of my leisure hours; but now—knowledge itself will lose its charm unless you share it with me."

Ferrand, in whose untutored soul every thing that was good, or great, or beautiful, meant Welleda, readily consented to the study of all that had interested her. When, therefore, the sun-beams shed their golden light upon the Neckar, she conducted him to a cave in the heather mountain, which opened to a subterraneous passage leading to the river's banks, and even beneath the rocks of granite, over which it rushes so impetuously. As they entered the dark cavern, hand in hand, a projecting branch caught Ferrand's hunting-cap, but he did not think it worth while to return for it. The star

on Welleda's forehead now shone forth in all the mild luxury of moonlight. It threw all surrounding objects into strong light and shade, softening all that was abrupt, and deepening all that was dark.

Ferrand felt her superiority for nearly the first time. Unhappy Welleda, you should not have exposed him to this! Something pressed heavily upon his heart—he was silent—and apparently uninterested. Welleda had lost the power of penetrating into the minds of others by any superhuman quick sightedness. Her beauteous bird was dead. But the love of a tender and anxious woman is almost sufficient for itself. Welleda felt that her mysterious powers were irksome and displeasing to Ferrand; and the generous being would at that moment have willingly sacrificed them at the heaven-lit altar of pure affection; but her time was not yet come!

Soon an ocean of splendour burst upon the discontented and astonished Ferrand, and he gloried in the very attributes that he had envied or disapproved the moment before. His own enthusiasm was awakened—and enthusiasm is too

wide-spreading to admit the existence of one narrow-minded idea.

The choice spirits of the various elements came forth to greet the lovely creature whom they seemed to acknowledge as their mistress, and torrents of light rushed down to overwhelm the dazzled senses of Ferrand.

But Welleda's presence and her gentle dignity supported him. She explained to him the properties and uses of all he saw. She gathered rays from the diamond, and dissolved the thin veils that hid one mystery from another. He listened in rapture, and proved that an instinct of comprehension is natural to a lover's mind. One effort made—and all follows as a matter of course. Be content to know that you have been ignorant—and you will soon become wise. The sun will pierce the smallest crevice that opens to his light.

It was thus with Ferrand; and by the time that he had wandered through all the rocky halls that lie buried beneath the Neckar, and smiled at the security which divided him from its impatient waters, his spirit soared above his humble birth, and drank in full draughts of the exhila-

rating spring of knowledge. He found increased force in his adoration of the lovely guide to it, and pitied the contraction of the mind that could not appreciate hers.

Was this all? Did admiring love confine itself to the contemplation of talent? Was it content to idolize? Must it not appropriate? Too fatal certainty—it must!

Poor little Amalie! how bitterly did she repent having told Ferrand the peasant-girl's story. Few things are less exceptionable than sisterly love; few things more amiable than brotherly sympathy. Amalie could not rest; something told her the real meaning of Ferrand's words; surely he had fallen into the snares of some powerful and malevolent being—and she—she was the cause of all this. Unhappy girl! She asked her mother's permission to gather sticks in the forest, the old woman freely gave it, for the stock was getting low. Amalie breathed more freely, and stepped forth on her angelic errand in all the simple and delightful truth of sisterly attachment. What would she not dare for her beloved brother's sake?

I cannot tell what induced her to walk in the

direction of the Wizard's Cave, as it was called from time immemorial. Perhaps a presentiment. At any rate she could not have put her courage to more sterling proof; for if the precincts of the enchanted castle were to be dreaded, those of the wizard's murky cave were to be shunned.

Amalie went on, checking her natural fears by some thought of her brother's possible danger, and an occasional hope of her influence over him. In a tumult of agitation she reached the awful spot. Was there a spell on its very entrance, or did Amalie's own exaggerated state of mind prepare her for the shock which followed, without the influence of any magical power? She entered. In the deep hollow of the cave hung the well-known hunting cap of Ferrand, supported by the feeble spray that had originally disengaged it. This was the first object that caught her eye. She wanted no more to consummate the ruin of her gentle mind. This was proof enough, if the fears of poor, affectionate Amalie had needed any: Ferrand then had entered the fatal cave! He was then utterly lost! Hope died on the very threshold of the place. It was too much. Amalie turned away and

rushed from the fatal scene. She never stopped until she reached her cottage door; but ere she reached it, reason had abandoned her on her flight.—Amalie was mad.

Let it be imagined, but not described!—Ferrand—guilty, enamoured Ferrand, returned also to his father's cottage. His fevered lips—his haggard countenance—his scarcely steady gait, all spoke the effects of some too exquisite, or too terrible excitement. But how was he assailed? Whose heart-piercing shrieks were those, calling upon him by name, and uttering the imprecations of madness against another name—too dear to him now?

If we glance at the intoxicating pleasures that had so recently assailed Ferrand, and contrast them with the home reality that now struck him dumb, cold, and motionless, we may fairly allow on the first shock the superior influence of the present to the past, and forgive him if he were for a moment unjust to Welleda. Welleda was his—but his beloved sister was irretrievably mad; and his own selfish happiness had driven her to this. Had he been betrayed? Was

he indeed the sport of the fiend that poor Amalie raved about?—Ungrateful Ferrand!

His father, mother, and two elder sisters now assailed him. They accused him of being seduced by the lady of the castle—of having yielded himself a slave to the powers of darkness. Fearful words and fearful curses were uttered; but they were absolutely nothing to the appalling cries of the dear sister whom he had ruined.

"See there," exclaimed old Heinrick, "see what the hell-doomed boy wears upon his finger! see the pledge of his union with a fiend—a witch—a damned spirit! Oh, boy, boy! Ferrand, Ferrand! is it for this that I have cherished you? Is it for this that I have been so proud of you? God punishes my pride, and my grey hairs will go to the grave before their time!"

"Father, father, stop," gasped the wretched Ferrand, "hear me—do not condemn me—I will prove to you that I am not guilty, unless, indeed, the love of what is good, benevolent, and beautiful, be guilt——"

"Say no more, say no more!" ejaculated the enraged Heinrick, "don't talk to me of the

blandishments of a sorceress, who has outwitted a vain boy—look there!—look at those blue eyes bursting from their sockets—look at those lovely lips, torn and bleeding; where is the mind that made them dear to us all, and the comfort and delight of my old age; and who—who has done this?"

Oh! faith—love—confidence! Are ye proof against every thing? Will ye be lacerated, torn, scoffed at, condemned—nay, even cursed, and yet remain true to the love-lorn Welleda? Will the ignorance and narrow-mindedness so lately removed, return, and shut up the portals of the mind to every just and generous emotion?

Ay,—yawn wide ye gaping wounds of the unseen heart! Ay, so it was with Ferrand! —"Here!" cried he, with wild fury, "take the ring—I will redeem it, if she be true—and die if she be indeed what you say—a fiend!"

So saying, he pulled the ring, a beauteous sapphire, from the finger on which Welleda had placed it, as a talisman of proof, cautioning him never to remove it. It was to be the spiritual emblem of his undoubting faith. Alas! see it now—given up in fear, incredulity, dread, and

despair. A livid flame arose from the brilliant gem, and scorched it to a cinder!—"Look—look! hell-born! accursed!" screamed old Heinrick, "see the very smoke of hell arising to confound you!"

The poor maniac saw it, and laughed long and loudly; but Ferrand rushed from the cottage, pursued by that hideous sound, to Welleda's castle.

And how had Welleda passed those very dreadful hours which were the sequel of a too dangerous happiness? She wandered impatiently from one apartment to another; and at length desperate and perplexed, hastened to the Chamber of Futurity, where magic mirrors had always revealed to her whatever she wished to know respecting herself or others. What was her horror, when on entering she observed the purple curtains slowly rolling down, and concealing the mirrors for ever from her view! "It is just," exclaimed she, clasping her cold hands together; "she who has sacrificed all to the present, must not expect any thing from the future!" Scarcely had she uttered these ominous words, when her own name resounded

through those marble halls in frantic and fierce tones.

Ah! who shall say what struggling nature feels when the first blow of despair strikes on the chilled heart? Who tell the sickening agony of the drooping spirit, and the palsied sense? What voice is so dreadful as the voice of the beloved one, when anger breaks its melody? And what creature is so meek, so humble, as the doating, timid, trembling woman who hears it? Alas! love's dream was indeed transient, scarcely had its transparent beam touched the threshold of enjoyment, when dismay and darkness closed upon it.

"Welleda, Welleda," shouted Ferrand, forgetful of all consideration, or even decency, "where are you? Speak, thou angel of sin?"

Heavens! Ferrand, dearest Ferrand, is it to me you speak? Protect me, thou hallowed shade of my adored mother! save me from such cruelty, and degradation! Oh, have I not sacrificed all?"

"Not enough, not enough, Welleda! Divest yourself of all those hated mysteries—prove yourself human if you can, or witness my eternal death!"

"Take them, take all—Ferrand!" exclaimed the injured Welleda. "I live for you only, of what value are these glittering toys to the scathed heart?" So saying, she tore from her neck a wreath of orient pearl, she snatched from her lovely forehead and her taper waist the star and zone, and her beautifully formed feet were divested of their purple clothing.—"Are you satisfied, cruel Ferrand?"

"One thing more, Welleda, and I am."

"What is that?"

"Meet me, to-morrow, at the Forest Fountain, before the assembled villagers; just as you are, without one of these accursed baubles, and then be mine by all ties divine and human?"

What a request! what odious misgivings! Yet to this evident degradation, the spell-bound, the exalted Welleda must submit! Unrelenting love! Will not the tears of thy victim suffice? Must the very heart's blood flow?—Yes, blood—blood—blood for the vampire!

Is it necessary to say that Welleda promised—could she refuse?

Ferrand left her—yes, he left her—to herself, to her sorrow, to her remorse!

But no—the noble-minded Welleda had no

remorse. She had indeed sacrificed all to love—but the very sacrifice implied a virtue, and she was not likely to disfigure her sublime generosity by regret. She remembered indeed her mother's prophecy, yet she was even content to "perish by misguided love" rather than live without it. Right, Welleda, right! it is better to die than live unloved, uncared for, alone, barren, and desolate!

On entering the cottage Ferrand found all quiet. Amalie slept. Some delicious oblivion had miraculously fallen upon her. The exasperated feelings of the family had subsided into the fitful ebbings of restlessness and dreams. Ferrand crept unobserved to his bed. "To-morrow," thought he, "to-morrow will decide my future fate."

He slept—as we hear some criminals have done the night before their execution. Despair is very exhausting—and the body is infirm.

Sleep on, Ferrand! it is the last time that you will sleep soundly.

Welleda! unfortunate, self-devoted Welleda! was there no sleep for thy woes? Did the burning thought within shine through thy ruined

peace? Welleda trembled in her own magic castle—she feared the creations of her own genius—all was distorted—life was a heavy burthen—yet annihilation was beyond it! She resolved to pass the night in her own favourite grotto, and accordingly hurried through the secreted garden to it. But oh! who met her on the very threshhold? Grinning triumph—diabolical triumph—satiated revenge—Wredmar! the detestable Wredmar!

Our dear Welleda had lost the noble courage of innocence, that sacred barrier between the devilish power of Wredmar and her own more spiritual superiority.

He had indeed been her early instructor, and when he gave her the purple flower in the plains of Upsala, he gave all of himself that was worthy her acceptance. In that mystic flower was concentrated the better genius of Wredmar, and having once placed it in so secure a deposit, he could never resume it. But when the purity of his lovely pupil rose superior to all temptations, then he was obliged to resign the palm of supremacy, and the white bird was Welleda's guardian spirit.

We know already that when poor Welleda gave herself up to Ferrand, the flower proved a very exact emblem of Wredmar's malice. We know too that the death of the white bird was but the type of Wredmar's approaching doom.

The sudden apparition of Wredmar was frightful enough; but after the first moment of surprise was over, the injured Welleda assumed all that was left her of womanly dignity and natural courage. "You are here to witness and accelerate my fate, Wredmar?" she exclaimed; "not to arrest it?"

"Not exactly," answered Wredmar; "but you may even now avoid the destiny that the angry Nornes are preparing for you. But I do not expect thus much of wisdom and gratitude from you."

"I understand you," replied Welleda, raising her youthful head with graceful pride; "I understand you, and resist you. Let the awful Nornes be satisfied, I am ready to appease them, and to seek my mother's shade in the world of spirits, to which I feel that I am hasting."

She turned to walk away from the presence of the gloating fiend, who now sought to win her

by the operation of fear. He sprang after her, laid his withered hand upon her arm, and muttered close to her ear—" Look—look, mad girl! perverse Welleda, look at your fairy castle!"

Welleda did indeed turn towards it involuntarily, she half hoped to have seen Ferrand at its entrance gate. But no, the tasteful and costly edifice was sinking fast into the earth, and Welleda saw its last pinnacle entombed! She broke from the cruel grasp of Wredmar, and rushed into the forest.

The next morning it seemed as if the sun had scarcely power enough to lift the heavy mist from the bosom of the valley; but when at length his beams had broken through all impediments, you might see numerous groups of villagers in their best attire, talking mysteriously together, as if some great event was about to happen.

Presently old Heinrick, his wife, and Bertha, made their appearance. " Well, neighbour, how goes it with Amalie?" asked one, judiciously touching the very string that was strained to bursting.

" Oh, don't ask—don't ask!" groaned Heinrick.

Just at the conclusion of this desponding sentence, the crowd of peasants opened to admit the young man, whose unbridled haste seemed as if it would bear down every obstacle before it. "Here is Ferrand," whispered the shuddering multitude.

And it was indeed Ferrand, striding on to the Forest Fountain; but his bitter feelings found some material for explosion, as he passed through the throng of sneering or terrified villagers. "Come, come on, cowards!" exclaimed he; "come and see your accursed folly, and ask pardon for it!"

He strode on, careless of the insults which such an address was likely to bring upon him. He could hear, he could feel nothing of external outrage. But something from within screamed "death!" into his ear, and something echoed "Welleda!" in his heart.

The younger peasants who had repulsed his rude words, were nevertheless half afraid and completely awed by his daring manner, and they tacitly agreed to think him deranged. "Why should we quarrel with a madman?" said they to each other. So they followed, as rapidly as

they could, the difficult path which Ferrand had chosen. Just then a shriek from a female voice, and a yell from Ferrand, came down upon them all with terrific strength. They hurried on, old Heinrick and his family at their head.

At the Forest Fountain, bathed in a stream of blood that gushed from her loving heart, lay the beautiful, the exquisite Welleda. Ferrand, wretched Ferrand, her half murderer, was vainly endeavouring to quench that flood of life. At his feet was a she-wolf—dead. This ferocious monster had realized the dreadful prophecy which overhung the fate of Welleda. "Wolf's brat—wolf's brat—thou shalt be devoured by one of thine own brood!"

Who shall survive the loved one? Let death grasp both in his iron arms—let the same grave close over them—and the same eternity await them.

When Ferrand had long clasped the corpse of Welleda to his heart in speechless agony, he looked down upon her composed features—calm, cold, and fixed. "Dead!" exclaimed he at length; "Welleda is dead, and I have killed her!"

His heart broke in that fierce pang. He was laid at her side beneath the lime-tree that shaded the fountain; and from that day, for centuries down, the scene of this tragedy has been, and is still, called "the Wolf's Brun."

THE LEGEND

OF

RUPRECHT'S BUILDING.

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It seems almost inconsistent with modern habits to identify the good and intelligent father of a family with the successful ruler of a kingdom; but it may be refreshing to look back a few centuries for a more natural state of things; to see, in thought, the palaces of kings and princes cheered by the happy sunshine of domestic endearment, and then to contemplate with added interest the picturesque ruins that bring such scenes to our imagination.

I have wandered often through the splendid court of Heidelberg Castle, and gazed on each separate fragment with painful admiration; but I do not think that any point sends its influence so at once to the heart as the little Gothic Gloriette of Louis the Third. I call it *his*, because

he hallowed it by finding leisure to fulfil, beneath its small arched roof, the sacred duties of a father. He educated his children himself, procuring for them at the same time all the advantages of skilful masters; and the fifteenth century was rich in these.

I will not, however, rob this portion of the ruin, I mean the large square building of which this window is the solitary ornament, of its claim to be valued, exclusively, as the most ancient part of the whole castle. It was commenced by the Count Palatine Rodolphus I., towards the year 1300, and completed by his son and successor, Adolphus, in 1325. Think of its grey hairs—I mean its grey stones!—not that the stones of Heidelberg Castle are grey, except where the influence of the weather has produced the fascinating neutral tints, for the deep red granite gives warmth and richness to its mouldering walls. The mountains which brace in the Neckar from Heidelberg to Neckarsteinach, with the exception of a few rocks opposite the abbey of St. Eubourg, produce nothing else; and some exhausted quarries in the immediate neighbourhood of the castle itself, are

specific criteria of its enduring materials; whether glowing in the blushing sunset, or melting into phantom outlines in the morning mist, they are almost equally beautiful.

Count Ruprecht was the next princely architect; and added his long, and now most gloomy, palace to that of Rodolphus and his son. Probably his visit to Rome on the occasion of his being crowned by the pope "Emperor of the holy Roman kingdom of the German nation," inspired him with the useful ambition of embellishing the proud residence of his ancestors—the noble burthen of the Jettenbuhl. At all events he was enabled to borrow much from Italy, and to nurse the rising talents of his son and successor, Louis the Third, our good father of the Gloriette. The liberality of Ruprecht induced many artists to give up their classic ground for pecuniary and personal advantages, and the young Louis knew how to value their instruction.

He, in his turn, encouraged and protected all who had taken a share in his own education, and retained them by munificence and friendship in his castle, as the future tutors of his children. Amongst these, he was more particularly attach-

ed to the two most youthful; the German Kemnat, and the Italian Geronimo Benini; both of them had married into his household, and seemed to have become fixtures in the establishment; both, too, were fathers, and the good and generous Louis saw no objection to including the young Raffaello and Eugenia as pupils of the Gloriette, wishing to excite emulation in his juvenile academy, and perhaps to illustrate his own estimate of real greatness in this simple and pleasing manner. Let us think we see the interesting group, while the many-coloured beams of the morning sun peer in through the antique stained-glass of the window, and brightly etch it. How touching the variety of beauty and expression, from the paternal dignity of Louis, the shrewd sagacity of Kemnat, and the melancholy pathos of Geronimo, to the boyish, yet graceful gaiety of the elder prince, the fine and thoughtful features of his brother, the classic contour of the young Italian, and the fairy loveliness of the little girl. But this is only a glimpse; we must gallop with time, and find all these young people advancing rapidly on the beaten track of man's existence.

Louis saw his children's progress with the

satisfaction of a virtuous parent, who has felt his responsibility and acted up to his sense of duty. There was a vast difference between the two young princes. Louis was amiable and agreeable, but not talented; whilst his brother Frederick, silent, thoughtful, vigorous, soared high above him: but this disparity never injured their sweet fraternity of affection.

Louis invariably consulted Frederick in all his youthful enterprises; and Frederick never failed to uphold his brother, and even joined in sports that he scarcely liked, for the sake of pleasing him. Louis was accomplished; he loved music, and danced well, for nature had endowed him with every pliant facility.

Frederick hated dancing, and at length obtained his father's permission to abandon it; but he fenced gracefully, rode well, and shewed much taste in architectural design. He was always planning some improvement for the dear old castle. His happy father listened to all his proposed changes or additions with affectionate pride; and often told him, that had not the public funds been so reduced by his own father's expenses in building, and supporting the trouble-

some dignity with which the electors had invested him, he would gladly listen to Frederick's schemes.

The talents of Raffaello were running parallel lines with those of his noble associate, with this difference, Rafaello preferred sculpture to architecture; he excelled also in music and singing, and danced as well as Prince Louis himself. Still there was a pensiveness and a daring that united him more closely to the younger prince. Frederick was always with Raffaello when Louis did not want him. And dear little Eugenia, the fair child with hazel eyes and golden hair, how old was she? She was just fifteen; beauty was in the blossom, and the flower grew lovelier with every added day.

Old Kemnat, for he really was growing old, gazed on his innocent child, and wished that he had married earlier in life. His wife had long been dead, but after the first years of loneliness, his daughter filled up the void in his heart; and he only seemed to live for her, and his adored pupil Frederick. The favourite prince often passed whole evenings in the apartments of Kemnat; and thus time hastened over the flow-

ery paths of youthful and unalloyed pleasure, and no one noticed its quickened footsteps.

> Oh, spring of life! oh, morning of the mind,
> Bursting with youthful vigour, glorious, bright!
> Pause ye of wintry mood, and thought confin'd,
> And bless for once, this image of delight;
> Cherish the young with kind encouragement,
> So shall ye, yet, redeem the time misspent!

It will scarcely be supposed that the young princes were allowed to possess all their superiorities, without exciting in certain noble families, whose views of education had been more limited, envy, hatred, and malice. The old Count de Luzelstein, the proudest and most powerful vassal of the electorate, contented himself with muttering some ill-omened prophecy, that all would not end well. His two sons, Wilhelm and Franz, were nearly of the same age as the princes; and his only daughter Leonora, though only sixteen, was the admiration of all who had seen her in her dawn of beauty. She was an exquisite model of personal perfection, but like all the females of the age, she was condemned to a very limited education, and her infant pride and passions were pampered, until

they became totally insubordinate, and defied all restraint. She had no mother. Her father doted on her beauty, and he had no mind to sympathize with or cherish mental charms. He was glad that the elector had no daughter, and he pleased himself with dreams of ambition, that placed his child on the throne of the palatinate. Young Louis had long been betrothed to Margaret of Savoy, he therefore was beyond reach; but Frederick might still be his son-in-law. In short, he only waited for a favourable opportunity of making the proposal to the elector. But death interfered between his ambition and its object.

In the year 1450, on the last day of the month of August, the castle bell was heard to toll. The centre tower echoed the mournful repetition of the funeral knell, and the church of St. Peter, and the recently completed one of the Holy Ghost, mingled their melancholy music; the troops were drawn up on the Place d'Armes; groups of the inhabitants were seen here and there, conversing apparently in a low tone, and universally dressed in black: some dignitaries of the university were winding their way up to the castle

by the northern entrance; and a procession of Carmelite monks were following them at some distance, bearing torches and various religious symbols. It was the funeral of the good elector that called forth this display of pious pomp. Louis, on his death-bed, had commanded that his funeral should be as simple as might be consistent with the dignity of the country of which he had been so long the chief; but he desired that his people might follow him to the grave. Best homage to a good and patriarchal sovereign. He was followed by *one large family*. The old and the infirm, who could not walk, were carried in litters by their children or friends; and every house was empty, for no one would be left behind.

Many tears were shed, and many heart-felt and fervent prayers were carried along the immense concourse, like the sighs and wailings of the ocean. All was finished. Money was distributed to the poor classes by the almoner and mayor; and the dark columns of people moved away with heavy steps from the scene of interment.

But how describe the grief of two affectionate

sons; and numerous devoted followers? Grief was new to Louis and Frederick. Louis sunk beneath its pressure during the first few days; but he soon rallied. It was too heavy, too dreadfully irksome to his weak, yet lively temperament; and he thought he was making a great effort to shake it off when, as a matter of course, he turned his thoughts to the reception of his bride, and his own coronation as Elector Palatine. It was a seasonable relief for him: and he fled away from sorrow as from something too serious to encounter. But Frederick hugged his affliction, and brought it near to him. He knew the depth of his sorrow, yet did not fear to plunge into it, and though no one knew how much he suffered, because he shrunk from every public demonstration, yet no one suffered so much or so long.

The death of his beloved father had a decided influence upon the ripening of his energetic character. He wandered about the forests of the surrounding mountains, and gave himself up to reflection and secret sorrow. After many hours' wandering, on one of these rambling excursions, he sank exhausted by fatigue and despondency

on the Giant's Stone; an enormous mass of granite, detached from its original bed by some violent shock, and which still hangs above the town of Heidelberg on the mountain side. For the first time, yes, the first time since the death of his invaluable parent, Frederick wept. Who can tell the luxury of tears, to those who seldom weep? Frederick sat upon the Riesenstein, threw his arms upon it, and buried his face within the close circle that they made. It was within a few days of Louis's coronation and marriage; for both ceremonies were to take place on the same occasion. The fair Margaret was installed with some of her relations in Rodolphus's building; and the first ball since the death of the elector, was to take place in the Rittersaal, or Knight's Hall, of Ruprecht's palace.

Louis was excited, he loved his young bride passionately; but the fever of conscious deficiency haunted him by night and by day, and made him feel the coming dignity of elector to be insupportable. He would have been glad in the romance of early and mutual affection, to have occupied a cottage on the banks of the smiling Neckar, so that his idolized Margaret

had been content to share his fate, rather than ascend the throne of his father, and feel that he was not made for it. He was, indeed, in the greatest distress of mind; when suddenly an idea of happy promise flashed across him. Might he not associate his brother with him in the sovereignty?

Blessed be that singleness of heart which does not envy the superiority of a brother! Blessed be the pure affection that rejoices in it! thrice happy Louis and Frederick! Louis clings proudly to his brother for support; and Frederick's noble nature yields it with humility!

Louis had employed several hours in seeking his brother. His heart was full to overflowing: he longed to pour his whole soul into the fraternal bosom that ever flew wide open to his embrace. At length, at a distance, he thought he recognized the manly figure of Frederick, as it lay stretched upon the Riesenstein. He still wore his black dress; and the graceful abandonment of grief was so new to Frederick, that Louis started in admiration of it.

Just at this moment a tall and elegant figure, on the acclivity of the mountain, withdrew. It

was Raffaello, who followed Frederick unseen; but who retired on perceiving that Louis was approaching the prostrate prince. The timid and truly affectionate Louis feared to interrupt a sorrow so violent and so private; but his last footstep had struck upon the sensibility of his brother, who suddenly lifted himself from the rock, in the dread of having been observed by a stranger. But when he recognized his dear Louis, he opened his arms, and both brothers rushed to the embrace. They stood, locked in each other's arms, for some minutes, a united pillar of strength. At length the sunny tears of Louis having produced upon himself all the soft refreshment of a summer's shower, he ventured to interrupt the deep sobbings of his brother, in broken sentences:—"Oh, Frederick, dear, dear Fritz, you are unhappy, while I am thoughtlessly hurrying on to seize new pleasures! Why did you not check me? I feel *now*, that I have not long enough lamented our dear father, and that the consummation of my marriage so soon after his death, will be indecent. Tell me, Frederick, my own true friend, do you not think I had better defer it?"

"No, no, dear Louis," replied Frederick, recovering with a powerful effort from the effects of his recent passionate burst of feeling; "Not at all, my brother. Nothing can be more consistent with the wishes of our deceased father, than your hastening to assume the dignity which he has left you; and as to the fair Savoy, you cannot choose a better moment for sharing it with her. May it be a halo of glory round you both! I am sorry that I should have distressed you so much, but the recollection of my father had overpowered me. Come, let us retrace our steps to the castle, and see how the Rittersaal will look with Raffaello's new piece of sculpture. He told me something of the design, and I confess I thought it particularly happy; but he begged us to refrain from seeing him working at it; so I suppose there is some little mystery about it intended to surprise us agreeably."

Frederick had thus skilfully diverted his brother's thoughts into the right channel; and the bridegroom elect, was full of the decorations and festivities that were to grace his nuptials. I believe he forgot, in those gay moments, the throne and every thing else; and his kind brother

kept up the excitement till they approached the western gate of entrance, arm in arm. The guard turned out, on either side of the gate, and the youthful and handsome brothers acknowledged their salutations in their usual condescending and graceful manner. But no soldier at that time was so thoroughly stiffened into etiquette as to forbear exhibiting on his countenance the radiant smile of devoted attachment; and their idolized Frederick always took occasion to say a few words to some one or other of them, which as surely were the boast of the supper-table for that evening. Louis's easy temper, and proverbial kindness of heart, had already procured him the name of the Debonnaire; but no one proposed, as yet, an epithet for the future hero, who was destined to win that which now follows his own, by repeated victories.

Just as the brothers were traversing the old parade-ground of the castle, the loud challenge of the warder of the northern tower, proclaimed the arrival of some important guest.

"That must be old Luzelstein," exclaimed Louis, "and his fair daughter, my Margaret's bridesmaid. Let us hasten to receive them."

"Do you go, my dear Louis," answered Frederick, "and leave me to make my appearance in Rodolf's Hall. I confess I am not just now inclined to present myself to the Lady Leonora; and therefore I shall just go and look at Raffaello's new production. I see he is expecting me; there he stands in the window:" so saying Frederick withdrew his arm from that of Louis, and disappeared instantly in the vestibule entrance.

Louis hastened forward, through the northern gate to the rampart terrace, from which he could observe the party that were approaching the castle.

He had judged rightly. The old Count de Luzelstein was conducting Leonora on her white palfrey. The old man himself, in travelling costume, rode by her side on a superb black charger, that strained its curved neck with pride, and snorted loudly, as if it intended some hostile attack upon the castle walls. Two knights in brilliant armour, attended by their squires, followed; and the rear of the little party was closed by retainers and serving-men of all description. At some distance from the Luzelstein train ap-

peared new guests, emerging from the valley formed by the Jettenbuhl and Friesenberg. These were the Bishop of Mentz, accompanied by the superior of the Carmelite monastery at the foot of that ravine. A numerous procession of monks and episcopal soldiers and retainers were following the bishop and the bare-headed Carmelite at a very respectful distance; for they seemed to be engaged in some very interesting conversation.

We will leave Louis to receive his noble guests; and imagine that he appeared to the best advantage, as he welcomed the old count, and gallantly assisted Leonora to alight. No doubt the haughty beauty condescended to appreciate the attentions of the young elector; and perhaps she thought that had she only been seen before Margaret, her victory over the soft heart of Louis had been matter of certainty. Never mind; many a proud enchantress deceives herself more grossly than her admirers. We will hope that Louis could look upon a beauty that surpassed all that he had yet seen, without either being dazzled by it, or contrasting it for one moment with the natural graces of his un-

affected bride. The heart, and not the eye, must decide such points as these.

When Frederick had mounted the spiral staircase of Ruprecht's tower, and gained the second story, he entered the beautiful Rittersaal; and was instantly greeted by the enthusiastic Raffaello, who sprang forward to meet him. "Noble and dear prince," exclaimed he, "now my courage fails me, and hope seems to die within me. Should you not like my work, I shall be seized with utter despair."

"Never fear, never fear, my good Raffaello, when did you ever fail to excite my warmest admiration? Let me see this chiselled perfection." Raffaello hid his face in his hands from nervous sensibility the moment his prince advanced towards the rich mantel-piece, over which was placed his *chef d'œuvre.* It was such, indeed, but the most exquisite part of it was not ideal!

"Beautiful, beautiful! Why, Raffaello, how is this? Whose face and form have you borrowed for your Angel of the Resurrection?" Raffaello, had darted towards Frederick the instant that the welcome word of praise escaped from the lips of the prince: but when this last question

was put, he blushed, and tried to stop the sigh that answered it. "Poor Raffaello! he loves her; I thought so," said Frederick, seeming to talk to himself; and then, turning abruptly to his trembling and interesting companion, he added, "I'll tell you what, Raffaello, nothing would give me more pleasure, than to see the sweet daughter of my faithful old Kemnat united to the friend of my early youth." With these kind words, he caught the young artist to his breast, in a momentary embrace. Raffaello, overcome and choked with a variety of emotions, fell upon his knee, and grasped those of his benefactor with the convulsions of gratitude, too lively, and too deep for expression.

Just at this critical moment, when it was difficult to say which of the two individuals was most affected, the superb doors that connected the hall of Ruprecht with that of Rodolf, flew wide open; several court pages and servants lined them on either side; and then Louis came forward, with his usual thoughtlessness, leading the transcendant Leonora, beaming with pride and anticipated triumph, to introduce her to the

beloved brother, who, the world said, was destined to call this rich gem of beauty *his*.

Nothing could be more unfortunate than this well-intended surprise. Frederick felt shocked by it; not offended—for he could never blame his affectionate brother. But the too evident emotion, in which he had been detected, and Louis's first exclamation, placed him in rather a perplexing situation; and the violet eyes of the Lady Leonora, flashed at once their glance of haughty indignation on the mystery.

"Bless me," cried Louis, incautiously leaving the young lady by herself, "bless me, what an exquisite likeness of our dear little Eugenia!"

One of the knights, in the glittering armour, now came forward, to the support of his sister, and offering his arm, said with marked emphasis; "We surely are intruding upon Prince Frederick's admiration of this piece of sculpture; let us withdraw: Margaret of Savoy has just sent forward her page to request your presence in her private apartment."

"Certainly, I attend her," quickly breathed, rather than spoke, the mortified Leonora. But

had she known, that the seemingly cold and offended being, who folded his arms across his breast and leaned for support against the centre pillar that held up the groined ceiling of the hall, was feeling, for the first time in his life, the electric thrill, the homage to that beauty which the enraptured heart afterwards longs to appropriate, she would have felt that moment the proudest of her existence. She had seen and even possessed a portrait of Frederick, drawn by Raffaello, which the superior of the Carmelite monastery had contrived to purloin during the exercise of his *duties* as confessor to the late elector. He had conveyed it to Count de Luzelstein, who wished to inflame the ardent mind of his daughter and thus prepare her, as the principal instrument of his ambition.

We may judge how easily this was accomplished; and how impetuously Leonora entered into the scheme of working her way to the throne of the palatinate. When, therefore, Prince Louis invited the whole Luzelstein family to be present at his nuptials, and proposed that the Lady Leonora should remain principal lady of the court, after the marriage, the count and his

daughter accepted the arrangement with alacrity, and even with apparent humility. Wilhelm and Franz, the two brothers, hesitated some little time to sanction it by their approval. They detested the hard necessity that constrained them to do homage to the elector; and having lately enrolled themselves as members of the famous Secret Tribunal, their morose and fiery tempers assumed a degree of arrogance which they had not reached before. Their infirm old father was positively afraid of them; and never dared to do any thing without consulting them. But Leonora was too much like them to quail at their frown, or obey the angry stamp of their feet. If they upbraided, she ridiculed; and the domestic party of Luzelstein Castle was anything but harmonious.

Wilhelm von Luzelstein had been once defeated by the young Prince Frederick, in a tournament given at the castle of Luzelstein. This was never to be forgiven: and though he at length consented to his father's plans respecting his sister, no cordial wish of success accompanied his tardy permission, to have her enrolled first lady of the court. It was he who

stepped forward to conduct his sister from the Rittersaal; and uttered the words we have quoted, in his most contemptuous manner. They fell unheeded on the ear of him whom they were intended to provoke; and he saw Leonora vanish from the spot, without addressing a word to her. Louis, whose attention had been engrossed by various details of the sculpture, was quite unprepared to find himself, his brother, and the artist, the only persons in the spacious chamber. "Holy Mary!" he exclaimed, "Where is the fair lady that I escorted hither?"

"She is gone away with that perverse brother of hers," answered Frederick.

"The Princess Margaret sent to request her presence," rejoined Raffaello.

"Indeed! then I bid you both farewell; but dearest Frederick, will you come to my closet to-night, I have something of the greatest importance to tell you?"

"Certainly, my dear Louis," replied Frederick, slightly wondering at the sudden earnestness of his brother's manner, but too much preoccupied to attach any very definite idea to it.

"It would not be amiss, I think, to dress, for

the afternoon wears away, and this ball is to begin early," continued he, and as the Italian mirror hung before him, he involuntarily glanced at his own image. Nay, he went further, he even desired Raffaello to accompany him to his private chamber, and choose his dress for the evening. We may be sure that the artist heard this proposition with delight; and determined to make the noble model wear its best looks.

This was a gay day for the town of Heidelberg. All its hotels were filled with the guests, who had been bidden to the balls and tournament; and many a fair girl hoped to obtain a due share of the admiration and gallantry of the noble cavaliers. But she who was calculated to win the secret homage of all hearts, was the least conscious of her power. We have observed that degree of silence towards Eugenia, that her ingenuous modesty seemed to claim; nevertheless we have thought of her, as she sat in her aged father's small but very neat apartment; drawing something that Raffaello had left her to copy, or reading some Italian poem that he had lent her. Her sylph-like form, too, was sometimes seen wandering in the direction of the Wolf's Brun;

but not even Raffaello presumed to follow her, when she was alone. With every advantage that nature and education could bestow, Eugenia was the most diffident and sensitive of her sex.

When, therefore, the amiable Margaret of Savoy received her as her future attendant, she could not fail to love her with the protecting fondness of an eldest sister. All this condescension did not overwhelm the gentle Eugenia; for had she not been from her childhood the companion of princes? But she felt grateful and devoted, and loved her benevolent mistress with enthusiasm.

We may then judge the surprise of Leonora, when on entering the apartment of the bride-elect, she saw the living representative of the beautiful statue, sitting at Margaret's feet; whilst that lady herself was wreathing a coronet of white roses, in the flowing ringlets of her favourite. Leonora started at the identity of the one, and at the occupation of the other. Margaret rose to receive her guest, with easy grace, delighted at her beauty; for no one could see her, and not feel the influence of its first impression; and anxious to dispense with the useless ceremonies

of recent acquaintance, she began a sprightly conversation on the approaching ball. This was a subject on which Leonora also could be voluble; and the two ladies were soon involved in a discussion of the merits of Genoa velvet, brocades, silver tissues, and other delicate and costly accessories.

In the mean time, the sweet girl had risen from her lowly posture; the white rose coronet falling on her neck with the abundance of silken hair that had been thrown into such pleasing confusion by the princess; and she still held in the fold of her loose and simple drapery, numerous spoils from the flower garden, not knowing exactly what to do with them.

The keen and almost harsh look that the lady Leonora sent from time to time towards her, seemed to destroy her presence of mind at once. Eugenia saw her future bitter enemy before her; and perhaps there is some instinct in the human mind, that teaches us to shudder when an unfriendly being approaches us. If not,—the mere animals are better off, in this respect, than man, the master-piece.

"What is the matter, child?" said the light-

hearted Margaret. "Don't be afraid of appearing to any disadvantage, because I have let those imprisoned locks fall down upon your shoulders; I assure you, it is very becoming, is it not, Lady Leonora?" added she, turning to look for the acquiescence of her new acquaintance.

"Oh! certainly, yes, undoubtedly, your highness's taste must be good; but may I ask the name of the fair damsel? I suppose she is not always called the Angel?"

At these words Eugenia turned deadly pale, and seemed ready to faint. The warm-hearted princess ran and caught her, as she was sinking on the floor. "Good Saint Margaret be my speed! the child is ill; and the ball-room may lose one of its best ornaments."

"Indeed!" rejoined Leonora, slightly turning away from an excess of condescension that appeared to disgust her.

Eugenia rallied, and pressed the princess's hand to her lips, asking her permission to retire for a short time to her own apartment. This was of course instantly granted. Eugenia curtsied as she passed by Leonora, who disdained to notice her salutation. She hurried through the

numerous corridors, and reached her own tasteful little apartment, ready again to sink with the apprehension of some concealed ill. She threw herself upon her couch, and wept bitterly.

The slight refreshment that went by the name of Vespers had been served to the different apartments of the castle; and now every one was seriously engaged in the important business of the toilette. Frederick and Raffaello were seen walking in the garden, near the fanciful arcade and water-works, that were looking beautiful in the divine sunset. They then struck into a new path, and mounted to that commanding terrace which overlooks the whole plain of the Rhine, girt with its sapphire mountains. "This is indeed glorious!" ejaculated the prince; "and I am quite in the mood to enjoy it this evening. You know, Raffaello, that there are times when every thing pleases us; and I believe the prospect of my beloved brother's happiness, together with that which I intend for you and a certain very angelic person, has had its full influence upon my feelings. There is some spell at work, surely, to reconcile me so soon to this gay clothing of mine; I thought I had vowed

to wear black all my life long! And now, Raffaello, take that packet," continued the prince, giving him a small rouleau of paper, "and try what additional weight it may have with good old Kemnat." Raffaello guessed the meaning of this; but before he could recover from his surprise and diffidence, his friend had dashed down a shady path, waving his hand in such a manner as to forbid his following.

Frederick reached the castle by one of the semi-subterranean passages which led to it from the grotto; and he went direct to old Kemnat's apartment. The old tutor was dressed in the court costume of the times, a strange mixture of Italian and Spanish taste and extravagance with German homeliness and solidity. He was in the act of giving a finishing polish to the hilt of the long and heavy sword that was destined to hang by his side, and as his back was turned towards the door, he did not see the prince enter. Like most old people, he was fond of hearing himself talk; and when he had no one to listen to him, he usually talked to himself. Frederick was in so happy a frame of mind, from rejoicing over the welfare of those he cared most about, that

the fastidious nicety of Kemnat's operations were vastly amusing to him; and he involuntarily placed his finger on his lip, and leaned against the wall, to gaze upon the silver hairs of his venerable favourite, and listen to his soliloquy.

"Never tell me," muttered the old man, "those Luzelsteins are a proud race, and no good will come of their being here. I'll warrant me, Count Wilhelm does not forget my darling's thrust, at the tilt-yard yonder; and what's more, he does not mean to let it go unrevenged. And then, they have not enrolled themselves in the list of under-ground demons for nothing I'll warrant it! No, no, the Secret Tribunal tells no tales. Well, well, that will do now: this old sword of mine has seen its best days, but I would not part with it for all that; did it not kill the monster that turned upon my young prince?"

"Ay, that it did!" said Frederick, coming forward, and clapping old Kemnat on the shoulder affectionately, "that it did, my good Kemnat; and I shall be glad if I can ever do you as great a service."

Kemnat, who loved his former pupil as a son, was full of duties and observances, and more

precise in his ceremonies towards the princes than any court calendar. He withdrew, with many bows, several paces in a direct line facing the good-natured Frederick; who, laughing heartily at the ludicrous effect of his sudden appearance upon the old tutor, followed him close up, stretching out his hand, and saying—"Come, come, Kemnat, no more ceremony, for the love of the palatinate lion itself! You must sit down in that chair and have some conversation with me, for I have something to say to you before I enter the ball-room, that is blazing there with so many lights."

"Your highness, I am ready to hear your pleasure," replied Kemnat, full of those half-indulged, half-restrained smiles so becoming to old age; and his grey eyes twinkled with real pleasure, on perceiving that his darling, as he always called him, to himself, had regained his cheerful manner.

"Well then, sit down," said Frederick, throwing himself into the opposite chair. Kemnat obeyed mechanically; but took care to withdraw his chair far from the familiarity of parallel lines

with that of his guest, and sat bolt upright, in all the rigidity of courtly respect.

"You are growing old, Kemnat."

"Yes, may it please your highness."

"Why, as to that, I cannot say that it does exactly, though the older you grow the better you are, like the wine of a good vintage." Kemnat made one of those incurvations, and uttered one of those slight ejaculations, that speak pleasure better than words. "But, as I was saying, you are growing old, and you must, I think, be anxious to see your only child married and happy, before you can think of leaving her."

"Ah! very true, prince," said the father, touched at the mention of his dear Eugenia, "that is indeed my anxious hope; and I am sure if your highness will condescend to point out to me the man who will make my child a good husband, I shall die contented when my time comes."

"Then, Kemnat, though I claim no influence in a matter in which your daughter's feelings must be left to themselves, still I must say that

I know the man who loves her dearly, and who will not, I think, deceive me in my high-raised expectations of him. After the exhibition of the new piece of sculpture, that was seen by all in the castle this afternoon; I need scarcely tell you that I mean Raffaello."

"Raffaello!" exclaimed the old man, in astonishment, "why it never struck me. To be sure, it is very likely that the young man is attached to Eugenia, for they are almost always together; but then I never thought of that, because it was so natural to see those who have been brought up together fond of each other's society."

"Yes, we seem all to have been marvellously blind to the probable influence of Eugenia's beauty and amiable character. It would seem as if we all intended to place her among the tutelary saints of the chapel, and worship her as something too good to belong to this world. However, the urchin god is not so careless of good materials; and he has wounded the heart of poor Raffaello past redemption."

This tribute to the goodness of his beloved child was too much for the proud father; and he

tried in vain to dash away the tears that started from the fountain of paternal pride. "Psha, psha, my prince must forgive this weakness, in an old man who has long leaned for support and consolation on the dear prop of age, an affectionate and dutiful child."

"Forgive it, Kemnat! I honour it. But now that I have had this opportunity of doing justice to my friend Raffaello, let us drop the subject, and leave the young people to themselves. Come Kemnat, come with me to the ball-room; you are dressed for a squire of dames to-night, and I shall expect to see you flirting with some of the professor's ladies from the world beneath." The old man chuckled, modestly denied the imputation, and followed the prince to the magnificent saloon.

When Prince Frederick entered the ball-room, his eyes were riveted on its principal living ornament, Leonora. She was standing by the mantel-piece, engaged in animated conversation with the Bishop of Mentz, and apparently discussing the piece of sculpture above; the design of which was evidently intended as a feeling tribute of respect to the patriarch who

was now no more. I shall venture to describe it on this account; and I hope the delicate squeamishness of modern taste will not condemn it, as the production of a young and Germanized Italian, who did not remember ever to have seen the country of his birth, the classic land of his inspiration.

A death's head, surmounted by an hour-glass, formed the base of the piece. On either side of this emblem of mortality were poppy plants; two of which came out from between the teeth, as if to signify the eternal sleep of all-devouring death; for these two delicate tendrils mounted towards the hour-glass above, and there two serpents curled round them and cropped their flowers; thus completing the allegory. But above all this, was the winged angel of the resurrection, the conqueror of death.

In the dawn of the fifteenth century, and in an ancient castle of Germany, the association of ideas which such a design produced was pleasing and in keeping with the spirit and taste of the age. Too great a refinement of execution would have been less striking, that is, less intelligible; therefore Raffaello's youthful genius was the ad-

miration of all present: and Leonora, as a matter of course, gave her approbation with the rest of gazers; envying, however, each separate tribute of particular praise that was addressed to the personal loveliness of the angel statue. Neither Raffaello nor Eugenia were in the room. Raffaello was an artist and a lover; and he nervously forbore to witness the criticism of his work or his mistress: few, however, knew that the angel was on earth.

Frederick now walked towards the bishop, and requested to be formally presented to his fair antagonist in argument, and be allowed to espouse her side of the question, be it what it might.

This easy flow of gallantry was somewhat new in the grave prince; but we must trace it back to old Kemnat's apartment, and rejoice in the relief it afforded to the individual himself. Leonora was enchanted by the ardent gaze of her intended victim, and allowed one of Nature's most felicitous expressions to light up her features. We may be sure that neither study nor apparel was spared on so important an occasion; and if we could only look at some of Titian's costumes of the fifteenth century, we might

fancy some slight approach to one or other of them in the tasteful dress of Leonora.

I shall venture to describe it, without being as minute as it deserves. The exterior robe was of rich purple velvet, edged with a brocade of gold and rosettes of pearl; beneath it was a white quilted satin petticoat, with the same brocade pattern, the pearl rosettes being exchanged for large purple flowers belonging to the unearthly gardens of imagination; long loose sleeves left the moulded arm all possible freedom, and enormous bracelets of many-coloured stones, weighed on the taper wrists; the rich brown hair was plaited in numerous bands, and strings of pearl bound it round the beauteous head. The rounded form and warm complexion of the fair bride's-maid were seen to the greatest possible advantage in this costume, of which incontestable verity no one was more thoroughly convinced than herself. And let us allow full scope to Frederick's rapturous contemplation; for how could he guess that so perfect a temple had been sullied by an impure thought? Yes! let beauty enslave the eyes, but immaculate goodness alone can fix the heart. The triumph of fair looks,

without the enduring stamp of innate worth, is the *ignis fatuus* that leads us on through the night of early passion, but fades before the daylight of conviction. We must not therefore blame the ingenuous Frederick for falling desperately in love with the object before him. He had scarcely a thought or a look to bestow on any one else. His sister-in-law elect, with all the quick-sightedness of woman, saw how much he was struck with the new beauty of the court, and began to rally him playfully on his various inattentions to the rest of the party. She invited him to dance with her, and then made him over to Leonora, enjoying the expedient which had made it impossible for Frederick longer to refuse. The prince smiled at the trick, and sacrificed his consistency to the witcheries of a splendid ball-room, and the contagion of beauty's smiles and music's sounds.

When the dance was in full career, Raffaello ventured to steal into the room, certain of being unnoticed, and anxious to watch the graceful movements of her, whom he thought of seeing there, the partner of some one for the time more fortunate than himself. But the concentrating

power of a lover's eye will turn with instant disappointment from the most thronged crowd of loveliness, seeing with a single glance that the only one it wished to find is absent.

Raffaello thus immediately discovered that Eugenia was not in the Rittersaal; and he quickly moved towards old Kemnat to inquire the reason of so unusual an absence. "To say the truth," replied old Kemnat, "it is the very thing I cannot account for myself; and I have been ogling one of her highness's pages for the last hour, to make him come over to me that I might ask him; but the careless young caperer is pleased to disobey me."

Need we say that a lover's fears are as prompt as his glance is rapid, and that they do a world of imaginary mischiefs in their lightning course?

Raffaello suffered all the tortures of suspense, and was on the point of gliding from the room, when Margaret of Savoy espied him, and beckoned him to her. Alarmed at being discovered, the young Italian hesitatingly approached the august group. "This is our artist," said Margaret to the bishop, "and I am anxious to know

if he can account for the prolonged absence of the fair lady of his inspiration."

Raffaello was surprised and confounded at this palpable inference; and for the first moment since the completion of his favourite work, he feared he might have offended the lovely being whom he had thought to honour. A vivid flush told the quick passage of this harrowing thought across the chamber of the mind. He said, in an under tone, "I fear, your highness, that my too presumptuous likeness keeps the more angelic image from the room."

"Very probable," exclaimed the princess, good-naturedly amused at the lover's high-flown style. "Hugo," said she to the careless little page who would not pay any attention to the nods, winks, and contortions of old Kemnat, "go to the Gloriette chamber, inquire for the young lady Eugenia, and say that I desire her immediate presence."

Can my reader consent to the violent charm of contrast? Exchange the glare of hundreds of wax-tapers, for the moon-light ray that stole through the beautiful window of the old Gloriette,

and give up the glowing Leonora for the pale beautiful girl that was leaning on her hand, over the marble table, which she could remember as far back as when she was not able to reach its margin?

It is after all a great relief to follow the conceited little page, however sorry we may be that his message should disturb Eugenia's reverie.

"Oh, how dreadful!" exclaimed Eugenia when the page had closed the door; "how dreadful to be gazed at by every one, and called, in mockery, 'the angel!' Raffaello, Raffaello, what made you think of giving me so painful a distinction?"

It must be owned that Eugenia's present trial was formidable to a pure-minded and modest girl; but let us admit, nor do dishonour to even her modest mind, that after a few moments' reflection, the natural dignity of an elevated spirit controlled the weaker fears of her nature, and that she walked towards the spacious door-way with a composed yet unassuming step. We may imagine the calmed serenity of her features; the delicacy of her complexion, unbreathed upon by the heated air of the ball-room; her simple dress,

too, white as the coronet of roses which lay as gracefully on her head as if nature's hand had dropped it there; and to please the fancy of Margaret, many of the long natural ringlets were suffered to fall down upon her beautiful shoulders; in short, she looked very much like a bright visitant from the world above.

She gently opened the half of the massive door; and Kemnat, who had coaxed himself round to that part of the room as soon as he saw Hugo sent on his mission, stood ready to conduct his daughter to the foot of the temporary throne that had been erected for the princess. Eugenia might scarcely have contrived to reach it alone, but the glad face of her father restored her confidence, and she approached her august mistress like one of those fairy clouds that seem to wait upon the moon.

Margaret received her in her usual gracious manner, and pointed to a small stool that was near the recess occupied by the throne. Eugenia was glad to find herself seated in so quiet a nook, and began to survey the scene before her with evident pleasure. The dancing now ceased; and Prince Frederick led Leonora to her seat,

by the side of the princess, on a lower platform of the dais. Leonora involuntarily started when she saw Kemnat's daughter so near her; and Frederick recognising the playful associate of his childhood, looking more ethereal than I have described her, suddenly thought that he could not pay a more welcome or appropriate compliment to his young protegé Raffaello, or gratify the feelings of his old tutor so effectually, as by continuing his sudden dancing propensity in favour of Eugenia. He therefore, to the indignation of Leonora and her brothers, absolutely vouchsafed to solicit the young lady's hand as his partner in the dance. Nothing can be more distressing than a mark of attention to which we think we are not entitled; and the trembling girl looked hesitation and amazement at the prince and Margaret. But Margaret, very much pleased at what she thought a well-timed compliment to herself, in the selection of her favourite for the highest honour of the festival, immediately said aloud, "Right, right, prince; we will allow you to break your resolution a second time; I want to see Eugenia dance to-night."

We know that there was another person in the

room who had long wished for the same gratification; and when he saw the sweet flower of his fancy led forth by his gracious prince, his heart beat all its pulsations twice over, and he felt that he had never been so happy before.

Oh! love, thou exquisite mischief—what disguised poisons dost thou mix with the cup of life! What steals the maiden blushes from Eugenia's cheeks, and leaves them like transparent alabaster? And then again the eloquent blood comes back, in buoyant and agitated movement, to tell the tale of every new and thrilling emotion concealed within her heart. Her cold and tremulous hand rested in the friendly pressure of the prince's; and Eugenia, seeming to herself to dream, swam through the graceful dance with all the touching elegance and facility of motion, which one truly exquisite feeling will infallibly give to every look and minor impulse.

She seemed born for that one hour; then only to have lived, and to have wished for death when its last moment flew away. And poor Raffaello! Was he destined to awaken this unbidden allegiance of the heart's most sacred feelings? Had Eugenia ever heard him declare the

passion that he cherished more than life? He never told her that he loved her; and she never thought of him in any other light than in that of an affectionate brother.

But she loved!—fondly, timidly, intensely, and—hopelessly! The blameless boundings of her virgin heart were known however only to herself, and she hushed them into silent adoration. It was happiness enough to the disinterested Eugenia, to see the noble object of all these feelings the pride and glory of the palatinate; to listen to the warm incense of praise which the people sent up from their grateful hearts; and hear or conjecture the benevolent sentiments of the youthful sovereign.

We will not disturb her self-devotion, but we must feel for Raffaello, when the following morning brought to his inexperienced heart the cruel certainty, that Eugenia did not love him.

But we may not pause upon his sorrows, they may be infectious; and at any rate we must hasten on to their termination. I shall leave the glittering tournament undescribed; and merely say that haughty words passed between Count Wilhelm and Prince Frederick, which

must have ended in an immediate combat, had not his brother's marriage, on the very same morning, restrained the prince's burning indignation. Louis had revealed his ardent wish that Frederick should help him to support the weight of the administration, and he had consented to do so. The brothers therefore might be called joint-electors; and no one will doubt the fact of one of them being merely nominal. It was Frederick who reigned, and Louis who gladly withdrew from affairs so uncongenial with his disposition. Many important improvements were begun in the castle, and the foundation of the grand eastern tower laid; that beautiful and stupendous ruin, which says a thousand inarticulate things to us as we gaze upon it in mournful admiration.

And now let us suppose many months to have been shrouded in the past. Let us see the happy Louis wrapt up in the new charms of married life, anticipating the proud joys of a parent, and delighted with the success of his brother in all his negotiations and improvements. Let us turn from a tale of guilt that was whispered about the court, respecting the sudden illness and very necessary absence of

Leonora of Luzelstein, and see her return to the castle, hoping to conceal the peremptory cause of both from all mortal observation.

But there was no secret that Kemnat could not work out of its place, and the unerring aim of hatred fixed a just stain upon the character of Leonora. It was not however judged necessary to make it public; and Frederick, the former captive of her beauty, and the avowed suitor for her hand, contented himself with renouncing all claim to so high a honour—for private reasons.

We are not to suppose that he could do this with impunity. The brothers of Leonora were now her sole protectors, for the old count was dead. Still, as Frederick had duly given in his resignation to the hands of the lady herself, and scandal was already stalking on, the affair was too delicate to render a public challenge expedient. Moreover the two young counts had made preparations for throwing off the authority of the electors altogether. It would have been folly, therefore, to have precipitated matters. Private assassination seemed to minds like theirs not only the safest but the best medium of re-

venge; and the enraged and degraded Leonora heard the proposition without one pang of regret.

One lovely moonlight evening, when the first fall of snow had covered the earth with dazzling white, Frederick and Raffaello were watched by a hooded villain, as they walked together along the mountain road that leads to the Wolf's Brun. The prince was talking of various plans for the fortification of the castle, and trying at intervals to sound the depths of his friend's melancholy. A favourite mastiff was the companion of their walk, and it was fortunate for the prince that the faithful animal was more alive to treachery than himself or even his companion.

A low growl from the dog made Raffaello suddenly turn round; and the next instant he sprang forward to receive in his arm the bullet intended for his prince's heart. The dog had also made a movement as instantaneous, by leaping, with a savage yell, upon the breast of the assassin, and thus slightly changing his aim and bringing him to the ground as soon as the short gun was discharged. There was no time for wonderment. Raffaello fell into the prince's arms, apparently lifeless, the instant he turned round; and the

murderer's choking curses and the fierce triumph of the dog that held him down, explained the whole transaction in a moment. Fortunately Frederick had his hunting horn at his breast; and trusting to the immense strength of the mastiff, he still held with one arm the bleeding body of his friend, and blew a loud shrill blast that echoed in a thousand mountain voices. Fortunately there were some straggling soldiers near. Hearing the shot, and then the horn, they rushed to the spot, in the expectation of finding some one of the bristly savages of the wood struggling with the huntsman.

As soon as Frederick heard footsteps, he called aloud, to hasten the approach of the soldiers, whose shouts he recognized. The foremost of them was a young lieutenant to whom he was much attached. "Here is treachery," exclaimed the prince, "my friend Raffaello is I fear mortally wounded; do you support him, Otho, and let me see whom we have here."

"God forbid!" screamed Otho, in utter disobedience; and darting on the prostrate villain, he instantly dispatched him. At the same moment, the faithful dog dropt dead on the ground:

the assassin, whose throat he had seized, had buried his poniard in the side of the poor animal, who still held him in the grasp of death to the last moment of his own existence.

"It is Huberto, the squire of Count Wilhelm Von Luzelstein," cried Otho, looking into the dead man's face.

"I thought as much," replied the prince, making immediate arrangements for the conveyance of Raffaello to the castle, and giving an order to one of the soldiers to summon the most celebrated surgeon of the town to the assistance of his friend.

A few heavy sighs and a slight shuddering assured Frederick that his Raffaello still lived; but the distance to the castle appeared interminable, until they fairly laid down the precious burthen in the apartment of old Kemnat. We must not dwell on the mingled consternation, rage, and sorrow, of its ancient and respectable inhabitant, nor say how often he quoted his own foresight of the base designs of the Luzelsteins.

The grief and affectionate attentions of Eugenia were an admirable contrast to the useless

garrulity of the old man. When Raffaello's corpse-like countenance first met her glance, she felt that she could have loved him for his brave devotion to the prince; nay she half reproached herself for refusing to unite her destiny with one who was capable of such generous friendship towards the real idol of her heart. But alas! how quickly did this generous feeling vanish before the contemplation of Frederick himself, who was watching the operations of the surgeon with an interest so intent. "He loves the friends of his early youth!" whispered Eugenia to herself.

Happily Raffaello's wound was not dangerous, and time and quiet only were wanting to restore him again to health. He was carefully removed to his own apartment, which joined that of his prince; and Frederick gave up his few hours of leisure to the sick bed of his friend.

The obvious treachery of the counts of Luzelstein, and the failure of their nefarious purpose, brought on the explosion which they thought was to free them from their allegiance and dependence. But they little knew the talent of the hero whom they defied, and still less

could they judge of the enthusiasm of the soldiers he led on to victory.

Frederick reviewed his troops in the large square of the town of Heidelberg allotted to parade: it is the very spot now occupied by the museum and other buildings. A procession of the Carmelite monks came slowly from their monastery, the gloomy walls of which then occupied the whole of the Carl's Platz. They came, headed by their crafty superior, to bless the enterprise of the morrow. Father Paulus had, however, some very contrary design to this; and after the ceremony of the review was over, he endeavoured to sound the feelings of some of the officers towards the prince their commander. Careful and cunning as he was, something escaped from him of so doubtful and sinister a nature, as to alarm the loyal bosom of young Otho of Gemmingen and his brother Adolphus. They accordingly gave the hint to the wary Kemnat; and the old guardian's apprehensions were so much roused, as to make him almost insist upon the constant personal attendance of the two young officers in question upon the prince, even to their sleeping in the same room with

him. Frederick's resolute mind rejected all these precautions; but the entreaties of Louis and Margaret made him yield.

The morrow broke in delicate and roseate streaks upon the mountain valleys. A white frost covered the trees, that seemed to tremble with their icy foliage; long crystals hung from the rocks in a thousand fantastic shapes, varying the dark shades of their many coloured patches of moss and herbage; and the whole scene presented an aspect of winter loveliness scarcely inferior to the verdant richness of its summer dress.

The gallant prince, attended by his chivalrous suite, rode upon a Moorish steed of exquisite shape and fine action; but the noble bearing of the rider was alone observed or thought of by those he left behind in the castle, as long as they might distinguish his suit of black armour and the dark plume waving on his helm. The brilliant pageant moved away, gazed on by poor Raffaello, who now regretted his wound and subsequent illness for the first time. But the approaching confinement of the electress created a divided interest; and an infant prince was

born before the maiden victory of his uncle Frederick.

The unfortunate infant, who brings the greatest of calamities with it as the first anecdote of its existence, is an object of the most painful sympathy. One hardly knows whether most to regret its birth, or compassionate its motherless condition. It is placed in its father's arms as the immediate cause of death to its other parent. He cannot all at once love it; he must from the earliest moment pity it; and then, Time's soothing unction opens his heart, and he may, in the end, doat upon the innocent and helpless being.

It was at least thus with our wretched Louis. It has been already shewn how unequal he was to bear the weight of grief; and so dreadful a shock as the death of the electress was overwhelming. He was seized with a violent fever, and thus spared the consciousness of all the sad ceremonies that were taking place.

The most distressing form and idea of death must be replete with minute and harrowing details; and the mourner would do well to avoid all such aggravations. Death is mysterious;

and its shadowy form is its best relief; it is a sleep—a translation; the beloved one is taken away from you; she exists elsewhere; she is no more on earth, she is in heaven; she lives there! She is not dead; you may talk to her, think of her, pray to her; and feel that she hears and answers! But the narrow prison of the coffin and the grave seems to limit, stifle, and destroy all that is ideal in death.

Frederick heard of his brother's affliction and illness at the same moment; but he could not fly to console him. He had already defeated his enemies, but he was determined to make the haughty counts his prisoners; and to humble every vassal who had joined in their rebellion. He wrote to Raffaello, begging him to be constantly with the elector.

Louis had passed through all the distressing stages of fever, and now sank into a state of weakness, bordering on inanition; he had, as a matter of course, the best medical advice that could be procured; but it was necessary that one watchful eye should always be upon him, and the faithful Italian seldom closed his.

Four weeks after the death of the electress,

the physicians declared that life was at its lowest ebb, and that the succeeding night must determine the fate of the sovereign. During the night he was to take the most powerful stimulants and opiates, alternately; but the greatest judgement and decision were necessary in the person who should administer them. Not one of the physicians would undertake the heavy responsibility alone; and it was evident that together they would never come to the same conclusion, at the same moment; and a moment, even, might be of consequence in such a case. Raffaello, the delegate as it were, of Prince Frederick, and the constant attendant on the sick Louis, did not hesitate to incur this further trial of his strength; he clearly understood the situation of the patient; and like all persons of strong minds, in similar situations, he had more confidence in himself than in any one else.

The castle was silent as the sleeping infant in its nurse's arms; but none but the selfish could sleep on such a night; and with the exception of the Lady Leonora and her attendants, every eye was waking; it was the dreadful syncope of anxiety.

Raffaello was, of course, alone in the sick chamber: and let it not seem incredible, if I say, that he could not feel anxiety. The immense exertion, the utmost tension of nerve and thought, permitted no emotion to ruffle his equanimity; therefore, when he saw the light of life just trembling in its socket, he mechanically poured the stimulants down the patient's throat; and when the livid flame of fever began to flash upon the cheek and scorch the lip, he calmly and instantly gave the opiate.

In this manner the young man passed the eventful night: it was five o'clock in the morning; the elector was peacefully sleeping! he had done so for the last two hours. Oh! luxury of success! Raffaello could not suppose it; he felt the dangerous trial which he had sustained, when its excitement had passed away; and he fainted in his chair by the bed-side. But the exquisite sense of hearing retained some of its vibrations; and a heavy sigh from Louis, was the restorative for his attendant: just at that moment a bright gleam of sunshine rushed into the room through the door that some rash hand had ventured to open. It was poor old Kemnat,

whose fears had become insupportable after listening at the key-hole for upwards of an hour, without hearing even a breath. Eugenia too, had stolen from her watch beside the baby's cradle, and left the door of the chamber ajar. In taking one precaution she omitted another, for when the little thing awoke, and uttered its piercing cry, it was impossible that the sound should not enter at the half open door of the sick room.

Oh, happy sound—the father's heart hears it! Louis opened his eyes; Raffaello's almost started from his head; Kemnat shut his close, as if he would not witness the mischief he had done; the agony of the moment was fearful! Eugenia grasped her father's arm, and stood trembling by his side. Again the infant sent its wailing appeal to the elector; he was awake—he heard it—a few moments and then—"My child, my child! give it to me, give it to me," exclaimed poor Louis.

Holy Nature, this was thy remedy! The babe was brought, and laid in its father's arms; he feebly pressed it to him, and burst into tears, every one else wept, but tried to smother their

sobbings. "Raffaello," at length said the elector, faintly, "place it by my side, and let me sleep again."

The elector recovered rapidly; and the triumphant return of his brother Frederick, surnamed, on this occasion, "The Victorious," tended not a little to accelerate the languid beatings of a care-worn heart.

The Counts Von Luzelstein were compelled to do public homage at the castle, together with other revolted vassals; Frederick, too, had strengthened the electoral throne by new and important alliances and friendships. The future Charles the Fifth was on terms of the greatest intimacy with our hero; and time had much in store for him. He might then safely defy every thing but treachery; that loathsome thing which stalks abroad unseen, and darkens with its shadow a whole vista of glory.

After the submission of the counts, they returned to their castle, to plot against the life of their generous conqueror. "Let us have no more to do with private assassination, Wilhelm," said Heinrick, the younger, to his brother. "Huberto, to wit," gloomily replied the elder;

"no,—I will employ no more bungling cowards; I have a surer way for bringing down my game, I flatter myself."

"The Secret Tribunal?"

"Ay, to be sure; we were dunces in presuming to act independently of it; and we have been severely punished for it, I think: but I am not Count Wilhelm Von Luzelstein if I suffer the disgrace of yesterday to go unrevenged; and here I pledge myself, in the name of the Holy Tribunal itself, not to sleep, nor eat, nor drink, until I have devised my plan of ruin."

"Our sister will help us in that, I believe;" maliciously added Heinrick.

"Don't speak of her, Heinrick," replied Wilhelm, with deep emphasis.

Early the next morning the two brothers left the castle on horseback, and unattended. We shall not accompany them, though we are bound to tell the particulars of their mysterious journey.

"I accuse Frederick, Count Palatine, of detestable heresy, and of a secret compact with the evil spirit, to whom he has sold his immortal soul, for the assurance of continued success and victory; and to the truth of this I pledge my-

self, as a member of the Holy Tribunal, and hold myself in readiness to avenge the same upon the body of the delinquent, in such manner as shall be judged fit and expedient by the present assembly." So saying, Count Wilhelm placed his iron gauntlet on the table that stood in the midst of the gloomy cave where the Secret Tribunal held its sittings. As soon as he had retired to his seat, Count Heinrick came forward, and repeated the same ceremony.

The decision of the tribunal was consistent with its awful and clever system of entrapping its victims, and we shall see how nearly successful it proved.

The baptism of the young prince was to be celebrated by a tournament; and this was made known by proclamation, inviting all valiant knights to feats of chivalry.

The splendid residence of the electors was not likely to be empty when the friendly voice of invitation was abroad.

The feasting, hunting, and tilting went gaily forward; many illustrious strangers were present, and some amongst them, in the mysterious spirit of the times, claimed the privilege of in-

cognito. This was readily granted, and religiously observed; it even gave a flavour to the entertainment, and joy flowed on in an unchecked channel. Louis was once more himself; the variety of the scene had raised his spirits, and the young heir to the palatinate had his full share of credit in restoring his father to health and enjoyment.

Two valiant knights were particularly distinguished by the elector on this occasion. They displayed each day some new munificence, and paid the most marked attention to Louis. Many conjectures were started by the inquisitive household, as to who they might be, but their largesse silenced each servile tongue; and the credulous retainers whispered that they were foreign princes at the least. Louis himself inclined to the same opinion, and under its influence exerted himself to add to the honourable reception and attendance of his disguised guests.

The week was nearly over, but the last day of it was to be celebrated by the most splendid tournament that had yet taken place. The palm of knighthood and chivalry was to be contested, and the fortunate winner who should maintain

himself against all the five opponents who were to challenge him was to choose the queen of beauty from the glowing galaxy before him.

Each manly bosom beat high, each woman's heart swelled in anxiety and pride, when the auspicious morning stole into brightness and smiled on the glittering scene.

The place d'armes was the arena; numerous galleries were fitted up on the western and southern sides for the ladies; and a superb pavilion was to contain the elector and his court.

There was great bustle in the court-yard; horses and armour were undergoing all kinds of examination and correction by the careful squires; but the six knights were all to depend upon their own caprices for armorial bearings and devices, and their various accoutrements were to be a profound secret to all; their very horses were to be chosen promiscuously, as each challenger left the drawbridge.

The castle bell struck ten. Immediately after a loud and cheerful flourish announced the approach of the first knight.

Now he who first entered the lists was to be considered the challenging knight, and to try

his fortune with the other five separately; if he fell, his conqueror must challenge the remaining four; and so on, until but one remained.

The successful champion of knighthood and beauty, was to receive a golden-hilted sword from the hand of the elector, bearing on its point a coronet of silver roses for the brow of the fair queen whom he should select to do the honours of the ball-room for that evening.

To add to the imposing effect of this concluding day, a fairy bridge had been thrown across the moat from the large Gothic windows of the Kaisersaal, the beautiful hall in Rodolf's ancient building. The ladies were to reach their galleries by this device; and as the herald's trumpet gave the signal, the fair creatures stepped delicately forth in all the pride of conscious loveliness.

Eugenia's modesty made her almost the last in the train. Leonora de Luzelstein headed it. Louis now entered the pavilion with his immediate attendants. Kemnat was not excluded we may be sure; he had lately taken upon himself the office and dignity of historiographer, and the old man looked more important than usual.

The six heralds were now seen making the circuit of the tilt-yard at full gallop. They performed this evolution several times; and at length, he who had been foremost all along, leaped the barrier at the entrance, and curbing the noble animal he rode, planted himself in the very centre of the yard, and bowed gallantly to the elector.

"Your message, sir," said Louis, returning the salutation.

"I am here in the name of the knight of the white-rose wreath, to defy to mortal combat, in the cause of chivalry and beauty, any five knights who shall accept the challenge."

A herald beneath the pavilion now blew his trumpet, on a signal given by the elector. He then spoke.—"A gallant knight, bearing the device of the white-rose wreath, hath defied to deadly combat any five knights who shall separately accept his challenge; there are many brave nobles present, let their heralds appear."

Upon this the other five heralds, all abreast, leaped over the barrier, and blew the scornful note of acceptance.

"Your titles, gentlemen," said the elector's herald.

"I am the messenger of him who carries the lion's mane for his device."

"And I of him who bears the golden sword."

"My master defies death, and takes its emblem."

"And mine," said the fourth, "is of the bleeding heart."

There was a pause; the herald of the court looked at the fifth herald, expecting him to speak, but he remained silent.

"And you, sir, whom may you represent?"

"My master wears the plain shield, and is the nameless knight."

The herald looked up towards Louis, as if doubtful of his allowing this title.

"It will do, it will do," quickly ejaculated Louis. "My friends and guests are at liberty to assume or disavow whatever they please; and the nameless knight may win a name this very morning. Sound the trumpet, and let the knight of the white-rose wreath appear."

As the last note rushed through the air, a

noble figure, well mounted, stood at the entrance of the tilt-yard; the barrier was instantly withdrawn, and the champion walked his superb and restless charger to the appointed stand, taking care to salute the elector as he turned and backed into it.

Numerous armed knights now entered, and filed off to the eastern side of the yard, and drew up their horses abreast; each was attended by his squire, and the whole was a goodly array.

The herald of him of the white-rose wreath now blew a triumphant peal, which made the castle rocks ring.

The knight of the death's head galloped into the tilt-yard—and his herald answered the challenger's defiance. "Forward!" exclaimed Louis, animated by the approaching hostilities.

How many female bosoms were beating! How much curiosity was excited! But the disguise of the two knights was complete; their armour was new, and no one could say who either was.

Eugenia's heart told her that her hero would be there; the being of her worship—for she did not venture to think she could love him, she only knew that she could love no other. The

image of the princely Frederick was shrined within her inmost thoughts: it was her essence and her life, and nothing but a broken heart might tell her secret. It is true that melancholy had touched each sweet expression of her face, but heavenly beauty still seemed to plead against its own despair.

Without knowing the intended distinction of the victor knight, Eugenia had innocently crowned herself with a wreath of roses. She had remembered that her last mistress had chosen it for her, as the ornament best adapted to her unspoiled graces; but it was a most unfortunate decoration on the present occasion.

The moment that the Lady Leonora (now Countess von Luzelstein) saw the sword and silver wreath lying on the velvet cushion in front of the elector's pavilion, with the words "To the victor knight" embroidered upon it, she turned quickly round to the ladies of the court who were standing nearest to her, and exclaimed, "There is one here who intends to bespeak the wreath for herself, I think; and probably the Fraulein Eugenia knows who her champion yonder is?"

At this moment the elector gave the final signal, and the two knights rushed to the attack. He of the wreath performed the various preparatory manœuvres with grace and steadiness, and seemed rather to be amusing himself with the finesse of his art than hazarding his life and reputation.

The death's head knight shewed some impatience. His movements were sudden, though he displayed nearly equal skill. Still a certain restlessness and eagerness to take advantage of any slight unguardedness, on the part of his opponent, looked vindictive.

At length the horse of the first stumbled, and the latter charged furiously and wounded the other in the side. This was enough to rouse the spirit and prowess of the champion; he suddenly wheeled round, and came at once upon the flank of his adversary's horse, who reared, and fell back upon his wounded rider. The shock was tremendous. Every one thought that the knight of the death's head must be crushed to pieces, but the spirit of evil could not so readily part with one of his agents.

The gallant champion, considering this an un-

fair chance in the knightly game, dismounted, and ran to help the prostrate chevalier from the ground; but the fallen ruffian seized the offered hand with a strong grasp, and simultaneously attempted to thrust his dagger to the heart of his brave conqueror. The knight of the wreath did not suspect treachery, but his activity saved him from it; he sprang back several paces, and snatching the light battle-axe that hung at his side, he darted forward and aimed a steady blow at the loathsome image on the assassin's casque. The spectators were breathless. The stroke loosened the joints of the visor, and levelled the offender to the ground.

"Enough, enough!" loudly exclaimed the elector. "Remove the vanquished knight, and let the gallant champion be more worthily matched."

Two attendant squires now approached the knight who had been stunned, but not injured. They lifted him from the ground, and they, and only they, saw, through the loosened visor, the sallow features of Count Wilhelm von Luzelstein. A tent was at hand, and surgical attendance; and the herald of the death's head

dismissed the squires, and closed the hangings on his crest-fallen lord. We will leave them.

The cheerful herald now approached his noble master, doing the double duty of squire; he examined the trappings of the horse, buckled on such parts as had been thrown into disorder, examined the edge of the battle-axe, and replaced it in the knight's belt. A messenger soon entered the pavilion, to tell the elector that the vanquished knight was unhurt.

"So much the better," replied he with heat; "it would have been a pity that the blood of such a caitiff should have stained the honour of a brave knight."

The champion bowed gracefully; the Lady Leonora was observed to turn deadly pale, but a flush of anger soon replaced the livid hue. Eugenia's bosom throbbed—"Could it—oh! could it be? was it indeed he?" No one heard these aspirations of the maiden's heart.

The court herald gave the signal for renewed combat; the champion again entered the lists. But we must not minutely detail how he of the lion's mane, the golden sword, and the bleeding heart, each and all were discomfited. This was

not done, however, without much exertion and some risk; and the blood was seen trickling through the various crevices of the brave knight's armour, while he withdrew for assistance and refreshment to a tent close by. In the interval, however, old Kemnat came within earshot of the elector, and said in a low tone, "Your highness's pardon! But surely the champion knight can be no other than"——

"Hush!" said the elector, "wound not his fame by breathing the name he is pleased to honour in obscurity."

Kemnat bowed and retired; but the idea of the nameless knight gave him great uneasiness, he knew not why.

The champion returned; the ladies hastened to the front of the galleries; the by-standing knights leaped on their horses; the court herald and the champion's blew the note of defiance, and the herald of the nameless knight answered it. The knight followed. He was dressed in plain black armour, and without plumes, but his elegant figure and graceful bearing were only the more conspicuous.

The combat was begun: the champion rode

a new horse, and the last of his opponents was as well mounted as himself. The spirited animals seemed identified with the skilful riders who directed their movements; the white foam dashed from their mouths, their eyes were fire, and their necks a rampart. The elector was enchanted with the gallant bearing of both knights, and seemed to forget the possibility of danger to either party in the contemplation of this masterly display of art in an exercise which he appreciated in theory, but of which he did not envy the practice.

It was beautiful! it seemed as if the very clash of sword or spear had a distinct and regulated music. The ladies waved their scarfs and handkerchiefs. Eugenia involuntarily clasped her cold hands together, and felt a dizziness creeping over her brain; Leonora looked on contemptuously; and old Kemnat opened his mouth wide, until the dry air parched his tongue and throat.

At length the champion's spear wounded the nameless knight's horse in the neck; the animal was thrown back upon its haunches, and its rider sprang to the ground before it fell. The noble

conqueror leaped from his, to meet the knight on equal terms. A murmur of approbation ran through the stately row of armed nobles, and the gallant combatants vied with each other in activity and skill.

At length a smothered groan from the deep chest of the champion told how much he was suffering from various slight wounds and over exertion. This sound seemed to electrify the nameless knight: he sprang back several paces and gracefully dropt upon his knee, laying down his sword before him. The champion, astonished at this sudden relinquishment of combat, drew back in his turn, and looked towards the pavilion for an explanation, pointing with his sword to the immoveable knight, who seemed a bended statue cased in steel.

"How is this? what may this mean, sir knight?" eagerly asked the elector. Upon this the nameless knight started on his feet, threw up his visor, and rushed into the arms of his late opponent.

All was now confusion. The nobles, squires, heralds, all came forward; the elector himself, preceded by the page Hugo, carrying the velvet

cushion and its glittering ornaments, and followed by his impatient train, left the pavilion and entered the tilt-yard. But old Kemnat was there before him. "The prince, the prince! I knew it, I knew it!" shouted the overjoyed old man, with a hundred extravagant gesticulations.

"Which, who, which is the prince? What prince?" asked Louis and twenty others, in a breath.

"*What* prince! Where then is the second? Where is he who could do as Prince Frederick has done to-day?" replied the stout-hearted Kemnat.

"My dear, dear brother!" exclaimed the elector, approaching the champion, whom the faithful and anxious herald, young Otho Von Gemmingen, was already unharnessing.

"This, then, is yours," said Louis, taking the sword and wreath from the cushion.

"Will your highness permit me to do an act of justice with this?" asked Prince Frederick, receiving the sword from his brother's hand, and taking the silver wreath from its point.

"*Permit* thee, Frederick!" replied the elector,

embracing his brother, who bowing his thanks, and approaching him who had entered into the lists on a day when they were open to every gentleman as well as noble, and who had modestly forbore to wear those appendages of knighthood which were customary on such occasions, the prince said in a firm tone, "Kneel, Raffaello!"

The young man obeyed; and Frederick, striking him on the shoulder, exclaimed, "Rise, rise, sir knight, and from this day Baron of Durkenheim!"

Raffaello folded his arms across his breast and arose. "And now, no longer *nameless*, accept the sword which you might have won had not your diffidence restrained you."

"Noble, noble Frederick!" exclaimed the delighted brother; "let us follow the ladies to the Kaisersaal, they are escaping from us."

The Lady Leonora had in truth led the way to the fairy bridge, and all the tremulous ladies followed her, enchanted with the denouement they had just witnessed, and marvelling much who would—each thought she knew full well who *ought*—be chosen as the queen of the night.

Yet there was one who had no courage to follow the giddy group, one who never dreamt of her own supremacy; and *she* was left alone, and sank down upon a couch in fear and weakness.

The elector and Prince Frederick led the way, and the whole court followed them over the bridge into the Kaisersaal.

After congratulations, flatteries, simperings, and sighs were profusely exchanged between the prodigal courtiers, the elector turned to his brother, and almost screamed when he saw how pale he looked. The prince was indeed exhausted; the pleasurable excitement of recognizing his beloved Raffaello in the valiant stranger who had so skilfully opposed him, had checked for awhile the faintness that was overpowering him when the groan escaped him which enabled his faithful follower to make his fortunate discovery in time. Frederick in short fainted, and was carried to his private apartment; the ladies being spared for the time all perturbation on their own account.

The sumptuous banquet was served, but the exhausted prince did not attend it. The queen of beauty had not yet stepped forth in her love-

liness; and there was much conjecture wasted on the occasion.

We left Eugenia half fainting on the couch of the curtained gallery. In the bustle and excitement of the recent scenes, Prince Frederick's illness, and the banquet, she had not been missed. Kemnat and Raffaello were in the apartment of their adored hero; and when at length they left it with him to breathe the refreshment of the open air, they concluded that she was occupied with her toilette, or with some minor arrangements for the grand ball of the evening. Poor Eugenia! she was forgotten, and she was lost!

Kemnat, though unsuspicious of any sinister accident, was nevertheless uneasy; he was full of fancies, and an instinct of restless impatience led him to wander back to the busy scene of the morning. As the surrounding part of the tilt-yard was thickly covered with sand, his footsteps were not very audible, and as he was deep in thought, he forbore his usual proceeding of talking to himself.

Just as he entered beneath the scaffolding of the pavilion, he thought he distinguished voices:

he paused and listened. There were certainly some persons whispering near him. Kemnat did not like whisperings, he thought them ominous of guilt; and now he was silent in earnest, for his misgivings brought proof of a conspiracy as firmly and readily as real evidence would have convinced less suspicious men.

Presently the whispering ceased and four figures glided from the curtained gallery. Kemnat strained his eyes to distinguish them, but they were all within the deep shade of the projecting gallery. The moon, however, shone brightly beyond it; and as the figures turned round the corner towards the castle, Kemnat saw the objects of his unceasing and it now appeared his just suspicion, namely, the two stranger knights, the Lady Leonora, and the banished superior of the Carmelite monastery! This was an awful conjunction of evil stars, there must be something in it. The Lady Leonora was not absent from her toilette to study astronomy—the two strange knights were her brothers—and the crafty old villain was helping them to some diabolical plot. Such were Kemnat's prompt conclusions. He waited until the group had

had time to reach the castle, and then he stole away, big with the important secret. He went immediately to Frederick's apartment: the prince was not there; the page said he had gone with the Baron Von Durkenheim to the Kaisersaal. Kemnat hastened thither. He found the prince and Raffaello gazing at an oil-painting, which he soon knew to be the portrait of his daughter. Above it was suspended the silver wreath.

"Here is Kemnat," said the prince, "coming to witness the installation of my queen. I can find nothing more beautiful or more virtuous than that," pointing to the painting, "so my fair friends must excuse my partiality, if it be such. Raffaello thinks my selection unexceptionable, and I suppose you will agree with him."

The glad father poured forth his thanks in all the fulness of affection and gratitude; but when their first ebullition was over, he added somewhat mournfully, "Do you know, prince, I cannot tell where my daughter is all this time; I have not seen her since the glorious tournament."

"Never fear, Kemnat," answered Frederick,

"she cannot fail to know her merit, and she is shrinking from my acknowledgement of it."

This was not very probable. However the proud father thought it so; and he now proceeded to tell the story of the gallery. The prince and the young baron were struck by the curious circumstance, and promised to be on their guard. It was not, however, thought necessary to interrupt the pleasures of the evening by any abrupt disclosure; and thus they separated for the completion of their toilettes.

Prince Frederick observed a look of peculiar malignancy on the countenance of Leonora, when she entered the ball-room, and saw her lovely rival's portrait decorated with the envied wreath. He thought it was womanly jealousy and scorn, but that withering look appalled Raffaello, and he felt that it had a victim.

He left the ball-room, sick at heart, and went directly to Kemnat's apartments, certain of finding him equally ill at ease. He was not mistaken: there sat the poor old man in his arm-chair, in tears. Kemnat started on hearing a footstep.

"Is that you, Eugenia?" he asked in hurried accents.

"It is I, Kemnat; you are anxious? God! what is it that hangs over us both? what can have happened to Eugenia; my beloved, my own worshipped Eugenia?"

"God only knows! but I am sure—my heart tells me—that she is not in this castle; nay I do not know whether she even exists; that fiend Leonora von Luzelstein—"

"Hush, hush, for God's holy sake!" shrieked the lover, "you will make me mad; what can we do? the prince must be in danger. Eugenia too—I saw the devil's triumph of that hated woman, as she gazed on the picture. Eugenia, Eugenia! where is she, Kemnat? Let us fly to seek her; but oh! God! whisper not the possibility that she has fallen a victim to Leonora's jealousy and our neglect!"

Raffaello rushed from the apartment. We scarcely dare to follow him! He seized a torch, and ran through all the dismal vaults and passages of the castle. He saw nothing, he heard nothing, but half frantic terror urged him on.

Now there was a particular passage that communicated with the Carmelite monastery beneath;

Desperation seemed to tell him that it had something to do with the fate of Eugenia. He hurried on, until the low-arched door of entrance to another passage intercepted him. He raised a stone, that was near, and knocked furiously against the door. It suddenly opened from within, and enclosed him; but it was shut as instantly.

Poor Raffaello! he had indeed followed Eugenia.

The castle bell tolled the hour of midnight. The ball was over; and without the castle all was, or seemed to be at rest. The watchers in the towers occasionally told the hour, and said that all was well; but no other sound, unless, indeed, the ominous night bird ventured to break the sacred spell of silence intruded on the listening ear.

Kemnat, exhausted by his exertions, his terrors, and his anxieties, had sunk almost insensible. Prince Frederick entirely overcome, slept heavily on his couch. His brother the elector, slumbered soundly in the old chamber of Count Ruprecht. The two Gemmingens sat waking and watchful by the side of Frederick.

At one o'clock the conspirators had agreed to meet, for the consummation of their base and impious plot. The Countess von Luzelstein taking the lead in the conspiracy and defying Heaven as she courted crime, appeared disguised as the Virgin Mary herself, and entered the chamber of the sleeping Louis.

"Louis, Louis, Louis," said she, in sonorous tones.

Poor Louis in his dream thought he heard the voice of his deceased wife, and he tremblingly raised his head from the pillow.

"Margaret, my own Margaret!" exclaimed he, still imperfectly awake.

"Wake Louis, and look at me," continued the same deep-toned voice.

The elector turned his eyes towards the centre of the room; a lamp was burning on a pedestal near the couch: as soon as he perceived the phantom, he exclaimed,

"Great God! who or what art thou?"

"Fear nothing, my son! The mother of the Saviour brings a blessing for thee and thine, and the assurance of thy soul's salvation."

The elector shuddered as he listened to this

answer; he joined his hands together; but what was his horror, when the impious blasphemer proceeded to denounce his beloved brother as a heretic, separated from the church, doomed to everlasting destruction, and hourly occupied in conspiracies against his life?

Notwithstanding the phosphoric glory that surrounded the head of the virgin, and the appalling conviction that she was indeed present to him, Louis's affection for his brother triumphed over every thing; and he proceeded to defend him against the accusations he had just heard.

"Incredulous and obstinate!" said the spirit, "Do you then refuse to believe my words? Learn then, that descending just now with my divine escort of holy angels, I found the Prince of Darkness with thy abhorred brother. My sudden appearance, and the sight of the celestial spirits, took from him the possibility of flight. There he is, chained by my command, and gnawing his fetters. Approach thou King of Hell, thou thirsty lion, thou dragon, drunk with the blood of souls, thou who art nourished by the poison of sin, eternally damned—appear!"

Immediately on this a horrible noise of chains

came from the anti-chamber, the door swung upon its hinges, as if a tempest had worked it, and a dreadful roaring, like that of a lion, announced the arrival of the monster.

As soon as the Carmelite superior had entered under the disguise of Satan, of whose worst imagined attributes he might be considered an exaggeration, he precipitated himself before the virgin, groaning and crawling; and she placed her foot upon the head of the demon.

At this fearful sight, the deluded elector began to tremble in all his limbs, his hair stood an end, he clasped his hands together, sprang from his bed, and fell prostrate on the floor. The well-acted apparition now redoubled her terrifying denunciations, and in depriving him of the little reason that was left him, obtained his consent to the sacrifice of his brother.

The unfortunate and overwhelmed elector, sank into insensibility. The perfidious couple took advantage of the moment, to quit the chamber; and two knights, armed cap-a-pie, replaced them immediately.

Their armour was black and brilliant with stars of fire, and poignards were in their hands.

After recovering the elector from his swoon, they declared themselves ambassadors of the Holy Secret Tribunal, which had despatched them to the court of the palatinate, with orders to him to yield his brother to them; taking care, in all this, to make their discourse agree with that of the virgin, and as soon as the prince was sufficiently recovered, they obliged him to lead them towards Frederick.

In his impatience, the monk had most unnecessarily gone before them; and listened anxiously at the door of the prince's apartment. Emboldened by the silence of the place, he softly opened it, by the aid of false keys. He then looked round the room with uneasiness, but the sight of Frederick asleep tranquillized him, and his heart already began to bound with joy, on perceiving that success was as easy as it was certain. But this premature self-congratulation was somewhat checked, on perceiving a slight movement in one of the corners of the room. It was that in which young Otho sat. But he did not happen to be asleep when the devil was pleased to enter the chamber; and the Satanic pageant at first strangely surprised him. He

thought, however, that he observed a great degree of hesitation in the manner of entering, and that afterwards the demon seemed to acquire more assurance. This looked more like a trick of this world than of the lower one; and urged on either by reasoning or the impulse of natural courage, young Otho darted from his concealment, with sword in hand.

The father confessor, who immediately recognized the young guardian of the prince, thought it expedient to make all possible use of his disguise, in order to intimidate Gemmingen, while he at the same time brandished a poniard.

The instant that Otho saw the weapon, the masquerade ceased to terrify him. He leaped upon the assassin with the whole weight of his body; the monk, inconvenienced by his infernal accoutrements, was thrown down by the shock. He then had recourse to all such bellowings, hissings, and contortions, as he conceived appropriate and becoming in a devil, but a blow from the sword of Gemmingen cleft his head in twain.

"Die, villain!" exclaimed the intrepid Otho. At this moment, the prince, and Albert von

Gemmingen, waked from their profound sleep, and springing forward, gave the alarm, with loud and simultaneous cries for help.

At this very moment, the elector advanced escorted by the two chevaliers. The two latter, hearing the tumult conceived that they had been betrayed, and fled precipitately down the spiral staircase into the vestibule, and away, by the secret passage to the monastery.

Louis remained alone, but frozen statue-like with horror, he still stood at the open door, pale, disfigured, his lamp in his hand, and altogether the most fearful spectre that had yet presented itself.

Frederick and his friends were transfixed at this sad and still inexplicable sight, they could not speak, but they stared enquiringly at each other.

During this pause, the physical strength of the elector, exhausted by so many trials, left him once more, and he fell senseless at the feet of his brother. All thought him dead; the castle was in instant confusion. But the elector's dreadful situation was the thing to be first cared for. They recovered him once more; but the

shock seemed to have done its worst. He was in the most frightful agitation; and it was not till the morning was far advanced, that they succeeded in calming him. He then only remembered the horrible visions of the night. Daylight gave conviction to the terrific and credulous household; and all who could be spared from the sick chamber, were anxious to join in the search for the Virgin Mary and the two ambassadors!

The Countess von Luzelstein had left the town of Heidelberg in a close carriage before day-break, and the two stranger knights were no where to be seen. The dead body of the would-be devil, explained the untoward personality, connected with the discarded father confessor; and poor Louis shuddered and wept, as he saw how narrowly his beloved brother had escaped becoming the victim of a detestable plot. He loved him, if possible, the more; but the shock on Louis's health was fatal. His fever returned in full force.

Kemnat had been soon roused, and was forward all night amongst the most zealous of the searchers; and when Prince Frederick heard

from the sobbing old man, the mysterious disappearance of Eugenia, and then again the prolonged absence of Raffaello, who had sworn to find her or expire in the attempt, the whole vigour of his manly nature returned, and he rushed on to take the lead in the general search.

One of the first proceedings was to procure a legal document, to authorize the search of the Carmelite monastery. Several remarkable keys were found concealed in different parts of the confessor's attire; and each appeared of importance, as every key had a separate place assigned it; so that hurry or trepidation might not create confusion. "The devil," quaintly remarks the Legend, "had been very discreet and consistent in every precautionary detail; but he should not have peeped into Prince Frederick's sleeping-room, where he was not wanted."

As the prince and his formidable cortège made their appearance at the door of the monastery, surrounded by the indignant populace, and presented the order to the monk who received them, to give up all keys, and with them the possession of the chart and architectural plans of the monastery, with all its secret vaults and pas-

sages, the brother looked very much perplexed; he declared that the articles which the prince demanded were not in the power of any monk to procure for him, for that they were locked up in the private sanctuary of the superior.

"That is enough," replied the prince, "we merely wished to know where to find them: officers do your duty; forward, Kemnat, with the keys!"

To the astonishment of the monks, who had crowded to the vestibule, a band of soldiers entered the monastery, defiling the mock sanctity of its unholy walls, filing off in all directions, and one detachment stronger than the rest, following old Kemnat directly to the apartments of the superior. Prince Frederick now beckoned to some servants who were carrying a sort of litter. "Bring in the body, and let it be placed in the chapel. The holy brotherhood must learn why we pronounce them from this hour removed from our dominions."

A shout of wild approbation burst from the multitude, to whom the Carmelite brethren were extremely odious. The dead body of the superior, in the costume he had adopted as his last,

was now uncovered in the sight of the enraged people, and delivered over to the scandalized brethren, who carried it into the monastery.

"Down with the old black walls;—away with them," shouted the people.

"Not so fast, my good friends," said the prince, in his most commanding tone and manner. "We do not bear the sword in vain; justice will be done on the offenders, but no violence."

At this moment old Kemnat re-appeared, handing to his prince the important chart, numerous other keys, and various papers.

Thus provided, Frederick rushed once more forward. The monk scowled on him as he passed; and Kemnat momentarily expected to see a dagger glide from beneath some cowl. So he moved on immediately behind the prince, and the Von Gemmingens were on either side of him.

Frederick studied the chart, as he proceeded along the principal aisle of the building; he knew enough of architectural intricacies to be a good guide on the present occasion. He went over the whole of the monastery for mere form's

sake; for he never expected to find the objects of his search above ground. As a precaution, however, he left two soldiers in every apartment or corridor that he visited. And now he prepared to descend into the vaults and windings beneath.

He was much astonished to find that one of the secret passages beneath the Jettenbuhl, had a branch communication with the monastery. This explained, as with a beam of light, numerous mysterious proceedings of elder date, which could never be accounted for. It seemed also the ready clue to the fate of Eugenia, and perhaps Raffaello; young Hugo had declared that the Fraulein Eugenia had been left in the gallery the preceding day; and Kemnat's discovery of the evening's visitation to it, told the fate of the lovely girl too plainly. Still the fever of hope lighted up its false beacon in the mind of the wretched father. The prince was not so sanguine; the sneer of one monk, who seemed more strongly stamped with villainy than the rest, made him tremble for the sweet girl, and her rash lover; and as he examined every darkened cell, he expected to encounter some shocking confirmation

of his fears. "Lead on to the right!" suddenly exclaimed the prince, to the torch bearers. They turned in upon a dark and narrow passage; and after a few paces paused.

"We cannot proceed further, your highness."

The prince hurried forward, and perceived a newly built arch across the passage, half formed, and hastily stopped with stones and rubbish.—"Forward there, with the axes!"

Kemnat groaned—the prince placed his hand upon his breast, and leaned against the damp wall.

The obstruction was soon removed; and the party hastened on to the end of the passage, where they were met—by a strong door!

"The keys!" Young Gemmingen took them from the hands of the trembling father, whose eyes wildly glared upon the door, the opening of which was to wither his old heart.

After many fruitless attempts to fix upon the right key, the door at length slowly receded; every one caught the panic.—"Shall we enter?" asked the torch bearers.

Frederick, certain of meeting with the worst

evidence of unfair treatment to one or other of his friends, seized the nearest torch himself, and stepped hastily into the small chamber; the torch flickered, and he stood an instant within the door, before he could discern any object. At length, however, his eyes rested on something like a projecting altar, with a figure lying upon it. It might be a tomb, an effigy; he hushed his apprehensions with this rapid conjecture, and cautiously approached the pale corpse that was resting there in Death's own sleep! It was too much like the lovely creature it had been, in its serene and perfectly exquisite expression, not to be instantly recognized.

"Oh God! Eugenia!" ejaculated the prince, and throwing down the torch, he burst into passionate tears and clasped the cold burthen to his breast. A shriek of horror and despair announced the fearful certainty:—but an old man laughed hysterically, and rushed through the group that was crowding into the apartment.—

"Ha, ha, ha! she is mine, give her to me; it is my child; I will have her, you shall not hold me; devil and fiends of hell, don't mock an aged man!"—And with these hideous words,

and more hideous laughing and shouting, old Kemnat attempted to seize the corpse, and fell in strong convulsions at the prince's feet.

Frederick recovered his presence of mind instantly; and ordering the parent to be carried quickly into the open air, he himself took up in his arms all that was mortal of a thing divine.

We must imagine the rage of the citizens when the melancholy truth came into open day. The people and the soldiers could scarcely be restrained from tearing the edifice down, and maltreating the monks. These, however, were ordered to secure their doors, and to remain within them until the pleasure of the elector should be made known to them.

On ascending by the northern entrance, they were met by a group of soldiers, running at full speed:—"They have escaped, they have escaped; the Counts of Luzelstein have escaped by the mountain."

"Good God, what is this?" exclaimed the prince.

"We were on duty near the terrace on the east; and suddenly two figures, dreadful to look at, rose from the ground, like evil spirits; we

were all terrified; but as soon as they perceived us, they sprang towards us, and striking to the right and left with battle-axes, they forced their way through the guard, and we then saw that they were the two knights of the Secret Tribunal that his highness saw last night."

"Cowards!" impatiently exclaimed Frederick,—"forward to the pursuit, my brave fellows," said he, addressing his immediate followers; and leaving the sad servants to carry the two litters, the soldiers, and the prince at their head, rushed with lightning speed up to the northern gate.

It is useless to tell that the two counts had found themselves detained in the monastery passage, for want of the keys; and that they chose a favourable moment for their escape; moreover, they effected it, for the prince returned from a vain pursuit. His anxiety respecting the still undecided fate of Raffaello, perhaps reconciled him to deferring the punishment he meant to inflict.

The secret passage was, of cource, searched; and the door, at which poor Raffaello had knocked so furiously, and which had seemed to open

its jaws and swallow him alive, now gave up the dead; for the first thing that the guide stumbled against, was the murdered Italian!

He and the beautiful Eugenia were united in death, if they could not be so in life; one tomb contained them, and was ever afterwards called the 'Lover's Grave.' Old Kemnat never completely recovered his senses; but he wandered about harmlessly, and would sit whole days by the side of his child's monument, declaring that he was waiting to see it change into the angel of the resurrection. The good elector breathed his last shortly after the interment of the lovers; and the castle was long a scene of woe. The Carmelites were driven out, and the castle of Luzelstein levelled with the ground, the two counts having perished in the bursting of a mine beneath the tower which they defended.

Victory, however, called upon her favourite son; and Frederick hastened to forget his sorrows, in taking the command of the confederate German troops, to oppose an invasion of the Turks.

THE END.

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